

The Relational Construction of Woman Abuse:
Narratives of Gender, Subjectivity and Violence in South Africa

Floretta Boonzaier

Thesis Presented for the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
in the Department of Psychology
Faculty of Humanities
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN



AUGUST 2005

Supervisor:

Professor Cheryl de la Rey

Abstract

The Relational Construction of Woman Abuse: Narratives of Gender, Subjectivity and Violence in South Africa

This study examined how women and men in intimate heterosexual relationships attribute meaning to the man's perpetration of violence against a woman partner. Narrative interviews were conducted with women and men who constituted 15 heterosexual couples (30 individual women and men). Narrative analytical methods, informed by feminist poststructuralism, revealed that participants located themselves within multiple and ambiguous gendered subject positions. In their talk about violence and relationships, women and men 'performed' gender and enacted diverse culturally available constructions of femininity and masculinity. The analysis also showed that participants' talk about violence was embedded in broader socio-cultural mechanisms that construct woman abuse as a serious social problem in South Africa. Within-case and across-case narrative analytical methods revealed that couples' narratives were either constructed collaboratively or incongruently across partners. In collaborative narratives, couples' stories were congruent in terms of their content, structure and aims, for example, explaining the ending of the marriage. Incongruent narratives, on the other hand, were characterised by major disconnections in the content and function. It was concluded that, although presumptions about homogeneity prevail, greater sensitivity to heterogeneity amongst victims, perpetrators and couples is appropriate. This study provides insight into the dynamics of abusive relationships as well as a basis for suggestions about interventions for perpetrators and victims of woman abuse.

Floretta Boonzaier

August 2005

Contents

Abstract	i
Acknowledgements	vi
Chapter One	
1 Woman Abuse: An Introduction	1
1.1 Woman Abuse: Definitions	1
1.2 Woman Abuse: A Global Phenomenon	4
1.3 Sketching the Context: South Africa as a Society in Transition	7
1.4 Woman Abuse in South Africa	9
1.5 The Present Study	13
1.6 Thesis Structure	14
Chapter Two	
2 Woman Abuse: The Research Context	16
2.1 Individual Psychological Research on Woman Abuse	17
2.1.1 Perpetrator Psychology	17
2.1.1.1 Attachment Styles	17
2.1.1.2 Anger and Impulsivity	19
2.1.1.3 Personal Control	19
2.1.1.4 Psychological Types of Violent Men	20
2.1.2 Victim Psychology	27
2.1.2.1 Victim Psychopathology	27
2.1.2.2 Depression	31
2.1.2.3 Posttraumatic Stress Disorder	33
2.1.3 The Social Learning of Violence and Victimisation	36
2.1.4 Alcohol and Drug Abuse	43
2.2 Interpersonal Research on Woman Abuse	45
2.2.1 Couple Dynamics, Conflict, Power and Interaction Styles	46
2.3 Sociological and Socio-Cultural Research on Woman Abuse	51
2.3.1 Age, Education and Income	52

2.3.2	Race, Ethnicity and Culture	56
2.3.3	The Cultural and Institutional Acceptability of Woman Abuse	57
2.4	Chapter Summary	60

Chapter Three

3	Woman Abuse: Feminist Analyses	61
3.1	Feminist Understandings of Woman Abuse	61
3.1.1	Feminist Poststructuralism and Woman Abuse	64
3.2	Women's Accounts of Violence	67
3.3	Men's Accounts of Violence	72
3.4	Couple's Accounts of Violence	75
3.5	Chapter Summary	78

Chapter Four

4	Research Methodology	80
4.1	Feminist Critiques of Traditional Psychological Science	80
4.1.1	Feminist Epistemologies	81
4.1.2	Key Tenets of Feminist Research Methodologies	85
4.2	Qualitative Research	87
4.3	Narrative Research	91
4.3.1	Defining Narrative	92
4.4	The Present Study	95
4.4.1	The Research Process	95
4.4.2	Data Collection and the Interview Process	97
4.4.3	Insider/Outsider, Difference and Similarity in the Narrative Interview	100
4.4.4	Research Ethics	102
4.4.5	Sample Characteristics	105
4.4.6	Data Analysis	106
4.5	Evaluating Narrative Research	107
4.6	Chapter Summary	109

Chapter Five

5	Women and Men's Accounts of Violence	110
5.1	Narrative Beginnings and Endings	110
5.2	Accounting for Violence	112
5.2.1	Men's Accounts of Violence	112
5.2.1.1	Defining Violence	112
5.2.1.2	The Language of Justification	115
5.2.1.3	The Language of Mitigation	118
5.2.2	Women's Accounts of Violence	121
5.2.2.1	Defining Violence	122
5.2.2.2	The Language of Mitigation	126
5.3	Femininities, Masculinities and Violence	130
5.3.1	Traditional Femininity	130
5.3.2	Reconstructing Femininity	133
5.3.3	Hegemonic Masculinity	134
5.3.3.1	Successful Masculinity	136
5.3.3.2	Masculinity and Sexual Coercion	139
5.3.4	Gender and Power	143
5.4	Chapter Summary	146

Chapter Six

6	Couples' Narratives of Violence	148
6.1	Collaborative Narratives	149
6.1.1	Victims and Perpetrators	152
6.1.1.1	Women Victims	152
6.1.1.2	Men Perpetrators	154
6.1.1.3	Blurred Categories: Victims/Perpetrators	155
6.1.1.4	Agency, Capacity and Resistance	158
6.1.2	The Cycle of Violence	159
6.1.2.1	Dual identities	162
6.1.3	Couples Accounting for Violence	163
6.1.3.1	Damaged Individuals	163
6.1.3.2	Dysfunctional Families	164

6.1.3.3	Mutuality and Responsibility	167
6.1.3.4	Marital Conflict	170
6.1.3.5	The Dynamics of Power and Control	172
6.1.3.6	Alcohol and Violence	176
6.2	Incongruent Narratives	178
6.2.1	Victims and Perpetrators	179
6.2.1.1	Dual Identities	180
6.2.2	Accounting for Violence or Marital Problems	181
6.2.2.1	The Exertion of Control	181
6.2.2.2	Communication or Relationship Problems	184
6.3	Chapter Summary	186

Chapter 7

7	Conclusion: A Meta-Story of Violence	188
7.1	Women, Men and Narratives of Violence	188
7.2	Couples' Stories About Violence	192
7.2.1	Collaborative Narratives	193
7.2.2	Incongruent Narratives	196
7.3	Theoretical and Methodological Implications	198
7.4	Recommendations for Research and Practice	201
7.5	Study Limitations and Conclusion	202

Reference List	204
-----------------------	------------

Appendix A – Violence Indices	227
--------------------------------------	------------

Appendix B – Transcribing Conventions	230
--	------------

Appendix C – Participant Consent Form	231
--	------------

Acknowledgements

This thesis is dedicated to the anonymous research participants who openly and trustingly shared their deeply personal stories with me. I remain sincerely grateful. A sincere thanks to the Family and Marriage Society of South Africa (FAMSA) and to the National Institute for Crime Prevention and the Reintegration of Offenders (NICRO) for their organisational support and assistance with this project.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Cheryl de la Rey, my supervisor who incited and nurtured my passion for feminist research. Thank you for your constructive feedback and intellectual and academic support.

My gratitude to the AW Mellon Foundation and the Postgraduate Funding Office at the University of Cape Town that provided much of the financial support that made this study possible.

My heartfelt thanks to Kitty Dumont and Jonathan Ipser for assistance with proofreading and for acting as conversational partners who shared creative ideas. Sincere thanks to Adelene Africa for lengthy conversations that proved a great source of comfort, encouragement and guidance. Thank you to all of my friends and family, who supported, encouraged and allowed distance and space when I needed it. I would especially like to thank my parents, Robin and Carol for providing me with a good model of equality in a relationship. Thank you also for always supporting, encouraging and mostly for believing in me.

Finally, I would like to thank Sean Daniels for your love, support and understanding. You provided the comfort and sanctuary I needed when this journey seemed overwhelming.

Chapter 1

WOMAN ABUSE: AN INTRODUCTION

Violence against women is a widespread social problem affecting millions of women worldwide, and it is also endemic to South African society. For more than three decades, researchers have explored the experiences of women in abusive relationships. The focus on women as victims was important in order for feminist researchers to draw attention to women's experiences and to the magnitude of the problem (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Walker, 1979). However, this focus on victims' experiences inadvertently deflected attention away from men – who are the most frequent perpetrators of violence against women (both inside and outside the home). Consequently, woman abuse has come to be regarded as a 'woman's problem' – with society frequently blaming women and rendering them responsible for change. This one-sided focus had the consequence that the literature on *both* women and men's accounts of violence is not well developed. Our understanding of the problem would benefit by according attention to both partners in violent relationships. Starting from this premise, this thesis explores the experiences of both men and women in intimate, heterosexual relationships characterised by violence. This study investigated how couples, within the South African context, understand and attach meaning to their experiences of violence in their intimate relationships. It also sought to examine how each of the individuals in the dyad constructed a story about violence and the relationship in relation to the other partner.

1.1 Woman Abuse: Definitions

Millions of women in developing and as well as developed countries are violated and oppressed. Women are subjected to multiple forms of violence including sexual violence, sexual harassment, increased violence as a result of war and conflict, genital mutilation, dowry murders, acid burnings, forced trafficking or prostitution, multiple forms of physical violence and intimate partner homicide (also known as femicide). As a result, violence against women has been identified as a major public health, human rights and social problem, which requires urgent attention and resources. The United Nations (1993) defined gender-based violence as any act:

... that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivations of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life (§14).

Violence perpetrated against a woman, within the context of an intimate, heterosexual relationship has been identified as one of the most common forms of gender-based violence (Heise & Garcia-Moreno, 2002). Although women are also violent toward their intimate partners and violence does occur in same-sex relationships, women in intimate heterosexual relationships are at increased risk of violence from men partners, as this is symptomatic of patriarchy and male domination prevalent in society. There are also different contexts and consequences to women's violence towards men and men's violence towards women (Dobash, Dobash, Cavanagh & Lewis, 1998).

The focus of this thesis is on the violence directed at women, and specifically as perpetrated by intimate men partners. This type of violence has been labelled in a variety of ways, namely, as domestic violence, family violence, spouse abuse and intimate partner violence. These terms (e.g. domestic violence, spouse abuse) are used to refer to men's violence against women and vice versa and therefore mask the gendered nature of the violence – in other words, that the majority of violence perpetrated in the home is directed *at* a woman and perpetrated *by* her man partner. The terms also overlook the possibility that violence may emerge from the power inequalities between perpetrators (usually men) and victims (women). Feminist researchers such as Bograd (1990), therefore, proposed the use of the term 'wife abuse' or 'woman abuse' in order to illuminate the direction of the violence and to make the distinctions between husband-to-wife (or male-to-female) and wife-to-husband (female-to-male) violence explicit. Bograd (1990) defined wife abuse as "the use of physical force by a man against his intimate cohabiting partner" (p. 12). 'Wife abuse' is not necessarily restricted to violence only within the context of marriage, but also to cohabiting or intimate partners who are unmarried. For the purposes of this thesis, however, the form of violence directed at a woman, within the context of an intimate, heterosexual relationship, is referred to as 'woman abuse' as the term 'wife abuse' is deemed to be too restrictive.

Woman abuse encompasses a range of violent and abusive tactics and behaviours. In this study the variety of violent behaviours outlined in the South African domestic violence

legislation (Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998) was taken into consideration. The violence that women may experience at the hands of their intimate man partners includes the following forms of abuse: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional, verbal and psychological abuse and economic abuse (Bollen, Artz, Vetten & Louw, 1999). Physical abuse includes any act or threatened act of physical violence with the intention to cause harm. Sexual abuse includes any behaviour that humiliates, degrades or violates an individual's sexual integrity. It may be defined as "any unwanted physical invasion of an individual's body that is sexual in nature" (Bollen et al., 1999, p. 5). Sexual abuse occurs along a continuum of coercive behaviours (Kelly, 1990) and includes acts such as unwanted touching, kissing, or forced, violent sexual acts. Economic abuse includes the deprivation of economic or financial resources. It can thus be defined as "any coercive act or limitation placed on an individual that has adverse economic implications on the woman and/or her dependents" (Bollen et al., 1999, p. 4). Emotional, verbal and psychological abuse involves a pattern of humiliating and degrading behaviour "associated with psychological, spiritual and other forms of abuse that relate to an individual's sense of integrity, freedom of expression and well-being" (Bollen et al., 1999, p. 4). Emotional or psychological abuse includes social isolation, coercion, harassment, interrogation, threatening behaviour and excessive jealousy or possessiveness. Verbal abuse encompasses acts of verbal aggression, degradation, swearing, screaming, humiliating remarks, insults, name-calling or ridicule. Other forms of abusive behaviour include intimidation, harassment, stalking, damage to property, unauthorised entry into property or any other abusive or controlling behaviour. In this thesis, the varying types of abusive behaviours are separated for the purposes of clarity. However, research has shown that women's experiences do not always fit neatly into these predefined categories (Kirkwood, 1993; Bollen et al., 1999). Women's experiences of abuse are often complex and multiple, and can be viewed as a web of inextricable behaviours and emotions (Kirkwood, 1993).

In this thesis, the terms violence, battering and abuse are used interchangeably to refer to the multiple forms of violation suffered by women at the hands of intimate men partners. Domestic violence is used to refer to any form of violence perpetrated within a domestic relationship and is not necessarily perpetrated by a man or directed toward a woman partner (in other words, it may include child abuse, sibling abuse or elder abuse). Gender-based violence refers to violence perpetrated against women within the broader public sphere. This may include state violence, rape, female genital mutilation, forced prostitution or trafficking.

1.2 Woman Abuse: A Global Phenomenon

A recent World Health Organisation report estimates that between 10% and 69% of women from different countries have been abused by an intimate partner (Heise & Garcia-Moreno, 2002). Table 1 shows that woman abuse is a pervasive problem for a significant proportion of women across the globe and represents the results from different studies.

Table 1. National studies on women's experiences of abuse

Researchers/Authors	Study Coverage & Location	Sample Size	Past year Prevalence /Current Abuse	Lifetime Prevalence
North America				
Straus, Gelles & Steinmetz (1980)	US National 1975	2,413 families	12% ⁴	
Straus & Gelles (1986)	US National 1985	3,520 families	11% ⁴	
Rinfret-Raynor, Riou, Cantin, Drouin & Dube (2004)	Quebec 1998 Health Survey	2,120 women		6% ¹ 7% ²
South America				
Gonzales de Olarte & Gavilano Llosa (1999)	Lima, Peru	359	31% ¹	
Ellsberg, Peña, Herrera, Liljestrand & Winkvist (2000)	León, Nicaragua	360 married women		52% ¹ 21% ⁴
Diaz-Olavarrietta, Ellertson, Paz, Ponce de Leon & Alarcon-Segovia (2002)	Mexico City, Mexico	1,780 women	9% ^{1/2}	41% ^{1/2}
Moraes & Reichenheim (2002)	Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	526 pregnant women		62% ³ 18% ¹ 8% ²
Middle East				
Haj-Yahia (2000a)	Palestine 1994	2,410 women	52% ¹ 37.6% ²	
Haj-Yahia (2000a)	Palestine 1995	1,334 women	54% ¹ 40% ²	
Eisikovits, Winstok & Fishman (2004)	Israel	2,677 women	6% ¹	13% ¹

Researchers/Authors	Study Coverage & Location	Sample Size	Past year Prevalence /Current Abuse	Lifetime Prevalence
Asia and the Pacific				
Hindin & Adair (2002)	Philippines	2,050 married women		13% ¹
Muthal-Rathore, Tripathi & Arora (2002)	New Delhi, India	800 women		21% ⁴
Morris & Reilly (2003)	National Survey of Crime Victims	947 Maori women 3,568 New Zealand/European women 749 Pacific women		42% ¹ 20% ¹ 17% ¹
Europe				
Heiskanen & Piispa (1998)	Finnish Survey	4,955 women	22% ^{1/2}	30% ¹
Lundgren, Heimer, Westerstrand & Kalliokoski (2001)	Swedish Survey	6,926 women	28% ¹ 16% ²	
Medina-Ariza & Barberet (2003)	Spanish National survey	2,015 women	43% ³ 8% ¹ 11% ²	
Bacchus, Mezey & Bewley (2004)	London	200 pregnant women		24% ^{1&2}
Jaspard et al. (2000 cited in Rinfret-Raynor et al., 2004)	French telephonic survey	7,000 women	3% ¹	10% ⁴
Africa				
Deyessa, Kassaye, Demeke & Taffa (1998, cited in Heise, Ellsberg & Gottemoeller, 1999)	Ethiopia	673 women	10% ¹	45% ¹
Raikes (1992, cited in Heise et al., 1999)	Kenya	612 women	42% ¹	
Jewkes, Levin & Penn-Kekana (2002)	3 provinces in South Africa	1,279 women	9,5% ¹	24,6% ¹
Dawes, de Sas Kropiwnicki, Kafaar & Richter (2004)	South African National Survey	2,497 participants (59% women) (41% men)	6,7% ¹	9,5% ¹

Key: 1 physical abuse; 2 sexual abuse; 3 psychological abuse; 4 any or multiple forms of abuse

Differences in study methods, definitions and measures make comparisons across countries difficult. However, it is clear that a large proportion of women experience physical, sexual or other forms of violence in their past or current relationships (refer to past year prevalence and lifetime prevalence in Table 1). There are differences in women's experiences of violence in the different contexts due to a range of socio-cultural factors and due to the meanings attached to violence in varying contexts. Yet, there are also commonalities. Studies show that women usually experience multiple forms of violence and that these often occur simultaneously (Rinfret-Raynor et al., 2004). In a Nicaraguan study, for instance, 21% of women experienced multiple (sexual, emotional and physical) forms of violence (Ellsberg et al., 2000). The research also shows that the abuse is not an isolated incident and that women usually experience multiple acts over time. In a 1994 Palestinian survey, 21% of women had been forced to have sex two or more times, and in a 1995 survey, almost the same result was obtained, with 23% of women having been forced to have sex two or more times in the 12 months prior to the study (Haj-Yahia, 2000a). Studies from a variety of contexts such as Brazil, the United Kingdom and India show that abuse during pregnancy is also common (Moraes & Reichenheim, 2002; Bacchus et al., 2004; and Muthal-Rathore et al., 2002).

A New Zealand survey conducted in 2001 revealed ethnic differences in the lifetime prevalence of physical violence. Maori women, for example, experienced higher rates of violence than other groups (Morris & Reilly, 2003). This trend is apparent in other contexts as well, such as in the United States, where small studies of ethnic minorities have found high rates of violence. Yoshihama (2000), for example, found that, of a random sample of 211 women of Japanese descent, 80% reported being victims of at least one incident of intimate partner violence. Chapter Two of this thesis examines this issue further, showing how their socio-economic and cultural positioning may complicate minority women's experiences of violence.

Most of the studies reported on in Table 1 employed survey methods in order to assess the prevalence of woman abuse across their diverse samples. The *Conflict Tactics Scale* (CTS) (Straus, 1979) is one of the most common measurement instruments used in studies of this kind. Scales such as the CTS usually ask women to indicate whether they had ever experienced particular acts of violence or coercion (e.g. being slapped, punched, kicked, threatened or forced to have sex). As Heise et al. (1999) argued, the measurement of these particular violent acts or behaviours overlooks the "atmosphere of terror that often permeates

abusive relationships” (p. 5). In addition, study participants are not requested to fully describe their experiences, but are guided (or restricted) by the researchers’ own definitions of violence or abuse, which may not concur with their own. For instance, the studies in Table 1 show a widespread occurrence of physical violence (see code 1 in past year and lifetime prevalence columns). These large-scale surveys do not account for the complexity of women’s experiences, such as psychological or verbal abuse, and the consequences thereof. Furthermore, the focus on violent acts alone does not take account of the individual, interpersonal and socio-cultural contexts within which a man’s violence towards the woman partner occurs (Dobash et al., 1998). Although large-scale survey studies yield important information about the prevalence of woman abuse across a range of contexts, a qualitative methodological approach was adopted in this study. This approach allowed for deeper insight into women and men’s understandings of woman abuse within the context of South African society, a society, which has experienced major political, social and economic transformations.

1.3 Sketching the Context: South Africa as a Society in Transition

South Africa, located at the southernmost tip of the African continent, has a diverse population of more than 44 million people who speak 11 official languages (Statistics South Africa, 2004). South African society has a long history of violence, militarisation and oppression. South Africa is also a society notorious for high levels of inequity as a result of the previous political system of Apartheid. The Apartheid system was entrenched in 1948 when the Afrikaner Nationalist party came into power and laws were passed that allowed the white minority to gain social, economic and political power. Apartheid called for the separate development of the different racial groups in South Africa and the laws attempted to stop groups from integrating, thus reducing resistance to the white minority rule. Laws such as the Population Registration Act of 1950 dictated that, at birth, people be registered according to different racial groups. Individuals were registered as white, coloured (of mixed ancestry), black or Indian, and were then treated unequally in accordance with their racial classification. The Group Areas Act of 1950 ensured that races were physically separated – in terms of residential areas and access to public amenities. Groups of people (usually black and coloured) were moved out of areas in which they had lived for generations and moved into specific areas set aside for their racial grouping. These forced removals created an immense amount of psychological trauma as well as a number of associated social problems. The areas

demarcated for the oppressed groups were usually far away from the city centres and were underdeveloped in terms of educational, social, recreational and health-care facilities. These townships or ghettos became breeding grounds for violence, gang formation and criminal activity. Ultimately, a result of its divisive policies and practices, the Apartheid system created both spatial and psychological distance between various groups in South Africa. Although it has been more than ten years since a democracy was brought into existence (the first democratic election was held in April 1994), the harsh reality of social and economic inequality is still evident in the country today. South Africa has a large proportion of citizens living in poverty and unemployment, with vast income disparities and social inequalities between various groups remaining relevant features of life in South Africa. The official unemployment rate is estimated at almost 30% (Statistics South Africa, 2004). In addition, violence seems to have become a common feature of life in South Africa.

During Apartheid, the state utilised a variety of violent practices to ensure compliance to its oppressive laws. South African history is replete with examples of torture, assassinations and murders in detention, which were intended to quell any resistance to Apartheid. Today, various forms of violence have become almost normalised. During 1998 South Africa had the highest per capita rate of murder out of 12 other countries across the world, such as Spain, Canada, Zimbabwe, Brazil and Colombia (Crime Information Analysis Centre, 1998 cited in Masuku, 2001) and the country has been described as having unusually high levels of violent crime (Masuku, 2001). According to *The National Injury Mortality Surveillance System* (2002, cited in Stevens, Seedat & van Niekerk, 2003) homicide is a major cause of death (occurring in 46% of all mortality cases). Violence in the interpersonal sphere is thus a significant challenge in South African society. Furthermore, violence against women is a problem emerging from the domination of patriarchal traditions, oppressive social conditions and the widespread use of violence as a 'normalised' means of conflict resolution. Black women are particularly vulnerable, as their experiences of abuse are likely to be compounded by intersecting forms of oppressions including racial and class-based inequity.

For a long time there was a lack of reliable statistics on the prevalence of woman abuse in South Africa. Under reporting has been identified as a significant problem, and can be attributed to fear, shame and embarrassment and a lack of adequate social support (Vogelman & Eagle, 1991). These problems were exacerbated by the country's particular socio-political history and the oppressive system of Apartheid, where a complex relationship of fear and

distrust existed between the authorities (including the police) and oppressed communities. More recently, however, the manner in which the criminal justice system records statistics of violence has been contributing to a lack of reliable information in this arena. Woman abuse incidents are concealed in reports of common assault, assault with the intent to do grievous bodily harm, pointing a firearm and other crimes (Bollen et al., 1999). Despite these problems, the increasing amount of social scientific research over the last decade is promising and provides useful information about the problem in the country.

International research shows that women's experiences of violence are complicated by issues of culture (Abraham, 2000; Lui, 1999), race (Mama, 1996; Richie & Kanuha, 1997), class (McCloskey, 1996; Miles-Doan, 1998) and sexuality (Shefer, Strebel & Foster, 2000). Although there are similarities in women's experiences of violence across the globe, the idiosyncrasies of particular societies should be taken into consideration in order to do justice to the problem. In view of the above, this study accorded due attention to the South African socio-cultural, historical and political context and its influence on men and women's subjective experiences of their relationships.

1.4 *Woman Abuse in South Africa*

Large-scale health or crime surveys are valuable sources of information on the magnitude of woman abuse in South Africa. In 1998, the *South African Demographic and Health Survey* (Department of Health and the Medical Research Council, 1998) found that 10% of the 11,735 women interviewed had been assaulted in the preceding year. A current or ex-partner had assaulted six percent of women, and most women reported more than one episode of violence during the past year. Assault by an intimate partner was also likely to result in injury and require medical attention. The *National Crime Victimization Survey of 1998* (cited in Statistics South Africa, 2000) found that women's relatives or intimates committed 34.6% of all rapes, that most assaults were likely to occur in and around the home, and that in 33.8% of cases the perpetrators of assault were known to the victims. However, these general surveys were not designed to specifically examine violence against women, but merely provided a basis for further research.

In order to address the gap of reliable statistics, researchers from a variety of disciplines have initiated large-scale studies on the prevalence of woman abuse. In a study conducted in three South African provinces, Jewkes et al. (2002) found a lifetime prevalence rate of 24.6% and a past year prevalence of 9.5% of physical violence in a sample of 1,279 women. Dawes et al. (2004) conducted a national survey on partner violence in South Africa, reporting on structured interviews with both men and women. Their results show that nearly 20% of participants have experienced physical violence in their domestic relationships as victims, perpetrators or both. Women reported a lifetime victimisation rate of 9.5% and a past year prevalence of 6.7%. Dawes et al. (2004) asserted that past year prevalence may be a better basis for comparing their study to that of Jewkes et al. (2002) (who reported a past year prevalence of 9.5% and a lifetime prevalence of 24.6%) as the latter study employed a much broader definition of violence and their conceptions of 'partners' included both current and past partners.

Other South African studies have examined the problem in specific samples of women such as those who attend health-care centres, antenatal facilities or those who sought assistance at social service organisations. Rasool, Vermaak, Pharoah, Louw and Stavrou (2002) surveyed a national sample of 1,000 women who had sought assistance for woman abuse at social service organisations across the South Africa. Women were asked to define and explain their own understandings of abuse, and 25% of women described abuse in terms of its physical aspects. Seventy-nine percent of the women had experienced emotional abuse, 76% physical abuse, 62% sexual and 58% economic abuse. Thirty-one percent had experienced all four types of abuse. Jacobs and Suleman (1999) interviewed a community sample of 412 women attending a health-care centre in the Western Cape province and found that 48.5% of women reported current or past abuse by an intimate partner. Of the 200 women who reported abuse, 70.5% reported physical, sexual and emotional abuse concurrently. Additionally, 17% of women reported daily abuse, 26% reported experiencing abuse once a week and 18% reported monthly abuse. In another small-scale investigation, Bollen et al. (1999) examined the nature and extent of abuse in a sample of 269 women who sought assistance at domestic violence agencies in Cape Town, Johannesburg and Durban. They found high levels of physical abuse (90%), emotional abuse (90%), sexual abuse (71%) and economic abuse (58%), with 42.5% of the sample experiencing multiple forms of violence. These studies demonstrate that women rarely experience only one form of violence. Often, they experience physical, sexual, psychological and economic forms of abuse simultaneously and, as

Kirkwood (1993) pointed out, all forms of violence also have emotional components and consequences for women. Bollen et al.'s (1999) study also drew attention to the complexity of the problem by showing how women, who had experienced multiple forms of violence, when asked about specific incidents, were unable to focus on the worst or on single events. This finding has important implications for the methodologies used to explore woman abuse.

The findings of South African research mirror international trends by showing that woman abuse is fairly common in samples of pregnant women. Mbokota and Moodley (2003), for example, examined the rates of woman abuse in a sample of pregnant women attending a public hospital in Durban. They found that, of 570 women interviewed, 38% had been abused at some time in their lives and that 35% of the women had been abused (physically, sexually or emotionally) during the current pregnancy. Dunkle et al. (2004) interviewed 1,395 women who attended antenatal clinics in Soweto. They found a 55.5% lifetime prevalence of physical and/or sexual assault by a man partner. Although the study sample was a clinical one, women did not specifically seek medical assistance for the abuse and thus, the lifetime prevalence reported in this study is particularly alarming. Women also reported a lifetime prevalence of financial abuse (13.7%), emotional abuse (67.5%), physical abuse (50.4%) and sexual abuse (20.1%) with many of these behaviours occurring more than once and concurrently. Of the women who reported lifetime abuse, 13.4% of women reported several forms of abuse, such as psychological, physical and sexual abuse.

Qualitative research has examined women's experiences of violence within particular socio-cultural and economic contexts (Angless & Machonachie, 1996; Boonzaier & de la Rey, 2003; Dangor, Hoff & Scott, 1996; Mashishi, 2000). These studies reveal that, in the South African context, abused women may be subjected to secondary victimisation as a consequence of not receiving adequate support. Social institutions such as the police subject women to further victimisation by not taking incidents of abuse seriously or by actually forcing the woman to reconcile with her partner. Maconachie, Angless and van Zyl (1993) showed that women experience a number of constraints if they attempt to leave abusive partners. Women indicated that the police were often unwilling to intervene or that their responses were frequently unhelpful. They also showed how responses from medical practitioners and religious bodies/leaders were unsupportive and in fact sometimes even sanctioned the abuse. The medical system has also been implicated in perpetuating violence against women by not detecting or asking about abuse and thereby failing to provide adequate

support. Jacobs and Suleman (1999), for example, found that, of 103 cases of abuse in their study, only 31 were documented in the medical records because health-care workers did not directly inquire about abuse. Research has also revealed that women choose to highlight particular aspects of their abusive experiences as a result of their social location. Boonzaier and de la Rey (2003), for example, showed that issues of economic control and abuse were particularly salient for women from a deprived, economically marginalized community. In sum, research shows that the particular socio-cultural, economic and historical context of South African society has implications for the ways in which women experience and respond to violence by men partners.

South African researchers have examined the constraints encountered by women when attempting to leave abusive partners (Maconachie et al., 1993). Some researchers have also looked at why women choose to stay with their partners (Mashishi, 2000). For the most part, though, not enough attention has been accorded to *how* women stay and negotiate aspects of their identities in these relationships. There is also too little research that engages with questions about the meanings of women's experiences as filtered through particular gendered and socio-cultural contexts.

In South Africa the research on domestically violent men is not well developed, although initial endeavours hold promise for further investigation. Abrahams (2002) conducted a study amongst working men in Cape Town, and found that 66.2% of 1,368 men admitted to using one or more types of violence against their partners. Verbal abuse was most commonly reported (55%), followed by physical (42.3%), emotional (42.2%), sexual (15.8%) and economic abuse (13.5%). Almost 50% of the sample reported using more than one type of abuse. The latter finding concurs with women's reports of violence and abuse. It is also of concern that these men reported relatively high levels of violence, as this may still reflect an under-estimation of the levels of violence.

Some South African research has also explored the relationship between forms of masculinity and violence against women. Shefer et al. (2000) found that students employed varied discourses of power, control, coercion and violence, and that heterosexual relationships were perceived as being bound up with gender inequality and violence. Discourses of violence and coercion had also become 'normalised' within heterosexual relationships. Wood and Jewkes (2001) showed that men's talk about masculinity and relationships was linked to violence and

coercion in their intimate relationships. Sexual infidelity and the objectification and control of women were also identified as a common feature of adolescent relationships and were associated with 'successful masculinity' in a particular community (Wood & Jewkes, 2001). Male power and control in intimate relationships, as well as associated infidelities, are also related to the high rates of HIV infection amongst South African women, in particular (Dunkle et al., 2004) and to the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Southern Africa, in general. The literature points to the interconnectedness between masculinity, race, class, age, and location and to the multiple meanings of masculinity and femininity, as negotiated within particular socio-cultural, historical and political contexts.

One of the questions explored in this study is how the South African context – characterised by high levels of poverty, crime, unemployment and deprivation – may shape how women and men attach meaning to and understand the violence in their intimate relationships. The socio-cultural context provides the lenses through which women and men filter their experiences and assess favoured or devalued forms of gender identities.

1.5 The Present Study

Studies often employ homogenous samples of either abused women or abusive men, which only yields knowledge derived from a one-sided perspective. There are a few qualitative research studies that consider the perspectives of both partners in a violent relationship. It is my contention, however, that research with both partners in the dyad is important, as an exclusive focus on women entrenches stereotypes relating to blame and responsibility. In this regard, Dobash et al. (1998) asserted that:

... scientifically productive empirical and theoretical approaches might profitably begin with the idea that men and women are likely to interpret their victimisation and perpetration of violence against intimates in very different ways and that an understanding of these acts can only be achieved by locating them within the broader context of attendant behaviour and the gendered relationships in which they occur (p. 407).

Some large-scale studies have employed samples of couples or report on couple data (e.g. Caetano, Cunradi, Clark & Schafer, 2000; Dobash, Dobash, Cavanagh & Lewis, 2000). Dobash et al. (1998; 2000) revealed that women and men's accounts of violence differ in terms of the frequency and severity of the violence reported and that men typically minimise their use of violence. Caetano et al. (2000) examined intimate partner violence and drinking patterns in black, Hispanic and white couples in the US. Large-scale studies employing couple data usually provide aggregated data about women and men's reports of violence. As a result, very little is known about how meaning is derived in relation to a significant other in an intimate heterosexual relationship characterised by violence. The results derived from these studies are useful but they provide us with *different* kinds of information about woman abuse.

The aim of the current project was consequently to extend previous research by exploring the similarities and differences in how men and women accounted for and described their relationships and the violence that characterised them. I explored how the meanings women and men attached to their experiences either affirmed or resisted socially constructed norms of gender, violence and relationships. The study also investigated how women and men constructed stories about their relationships and about the violence in relation to each other. The roles and interactions between marital partners were examined as well as how constructions of gender, violence and relationships were shared amongst partners. The study was conducted within a society characterised by transformation. It was understood that transformations at the political, social and economic levels have implications for the ways in which individuals will understand and attach meanings to their experiences in interpersonal relationships.

1.6 *Thesis Structure*

Chapter Two locates the present study by offering a review of the empirical research on woman abuse. The chapter charts a shift from conceptualisations of the problem as an individual psychological one, to an interpersonal one, and to a broader sociological and socio-cultural understanding of woman abuse. Chapter Three reviews some of the feminist research on woman abuse and proposes a feminist poststructuralist perspective as a theoretical grounding for this study. Chapter Four discusses the methodology of the study. Chapter Five is the first of two chapters presenting the findings of the study and explores the

themes that were common to men and women's narratives of violence. In the second part of the analysis, Chapter Six reports on the inter-relational issues evident in the couples' narratives. It shows how couples constructed the stories of their relationships and how they told similar or different types of relationship stories. In Chapter Seven I draw the thesis to a close by placing the findings into its larger theoretical context and by discussing the broader implications of the research findings and suggesting avenues for further exploration.

Chapter 2

WOMAN ABUSE: THE RESEARCH CONTEXT

This chapter sketches the context for the present study by showing how research has tended to focus on either the victim or the perpetrator, thereby overlooking the contextual and inter-relational dynamics of abusive relationships. Woman abuse research spans four broad areas of investigation (Hampton, Vandergriff-Avery & Kim, 1999). Firstly, researchers have accorded attention to why men abuse their intimate partners. A range of individual and social factors has been delineated. Secondly, researchers have also explored the consequences of woman abuse (primarily for women). These consequences include physical injuries, mental health consequences and a range of related social and economic factors. Within this area of research the focus has also been on how women respond to violence from their partners or why women remain with abusive partners. Women's responses have been outlined as either passive, pathological and debilitating or, more recently, as active and empowering. A third strand of research focuses on programme-level interventions on woman abuse. These include programme evaluations as well as studies based at shelters, hospitals, police services or batterer programmes. A fourth, but less common strand of research explores domestic violence prevention in general, such as school-based educational programmes. This review critically engages with the first and to some degree the second strands of research, arguing for an integration of the research on victims and perpetrators. The third and fourth strands of research are beyond the scope of this project, however, the findings of this present study do have some implications for domestic violence programmes, as outlined in Chapter Seven.

The first two research traditions outlined above have conceptualised the problem of woman abuse on different explanatory levels. A man's violence toward a woman partner has been understood in terms of individual-psychological factors, such as the personality deficits of both perpetrators and victims. Individual psychological research on woman abuse has also explored the social learning of violence and victimisation as well as the abuser's consumption or abuse of alcohol or other narcotics. Couple dynamics, power, conflict and interaction styles have been put forward as interpersonal explanations for men's violence. At the sociological and socio-cultural levels, a range of factors including age, education, socio-economic status, race and culture have been used to explain woman abuse. In this review I outline the individual psychological, interpersonal, sociological and socio-cultural research

conducted on the problem of woman abuse. In addition to presenting the findings of this research, I also show how these disciplinary endeavours have tended to overlook important aspects associated with men's violence against women partners.

2.1 Individual Psychological Research on Woman Abuse

2.1.1 Perpetrator Psychology

In answer to the question of why men perpetrate violence against intimate women partners, researchers have explored psychological traits, personality development and childhood histories of abusive men. These men have been described as psychologically deviant and intrapersonal psychological factors were accorded attention in order to predict which men were more likely to be violent toward their partners. In order to account for psychological differences, violent men have been compared to those who are non-violent (Holtzworth-Munroe, Bates, Smutzler & Sandin, 1997). Researchers have explored differences in self-esteem, assertiveness, social skills, impulse control, personality characteristics and alcohol and drug abuse. In the forthcoming section I present the findings of studies with respect to men's attachment styles, anger and impulsivity, and personal control, as these have been identified as important psychological markers in violent men. Following that, I discuss the research that has proposed different psychological types of abusive men.

2.1.1.1 Attachment Styles

Psychological researchers have investigated the adult attachment styles of men as a contributor to their perpetration of violence against women partners. Individuals who are securely attached characterise their relationships as happy, trusting and friendly, avoidant or dismissive attachment involves a fear of intimacy and extreme jealousy, while anxious/ambivalent or preoccupied attachments are characterised by obsessive thoughts concerning the partner and emotional highs and lows (Hazan & Shaver, 1987 cited in Kesner & McKenry, 1998). As Tweed and Dutton (1998) noted, attachment styles may provide insight into the psychological processes that underlie a man's perpetration of violence against a woman partner.

Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart (1994) offered a threefold typology of abusive men (see section 2.1.1.4) and argued that different types of men are likely to display different types of attachments to their intimate partners. One type, named the family-only batterer, for example, had fewer problems with attachment whereas borderline/dysphoric batterers who were extremely jealous and dependent were characterised as dominated by preoccupied or ambivalent attachment patterns. Babcock, Jacobson, Gottman and Yerington (2000) explored the connections between the Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart (1994) typology and related attachments styles, i.e. that family-only batterers would evidence secure or preoccupied attachments; that borderline/dysphoric batterers would more than likely be preoccupied; and that generally violent/antisocial batterers would be dismissing. They compared domestically violent men and those who were maritally distressed but non-violent. Babcock et al. (2000) found that violent husbands evinced more insecure attachments than did the non-violent maritally distressed husbands. They also found that the majority of violent husbands could be classified as dismissing or preoccupied. Dismissing and preoccupied husbands were more domineering during interactions with their wives than securely attached husbands (assessed through videotaped interactions). Dismissing batterers reported the most antisocial personality features and preoccupied batterers were thought to be comparable to the borderline subtype. Their study suggested profiles of two types of batterers. Preoccupied batterers exhibited patterns of emotional abuse and expressive violence – they likely became violent when their wives attempted to withdraw from the argument. Dismissing batterers were more distancing and controlling and became violent when women resisted their control.

Kesner and McKenry (1998) studied 149 heterosexual couples in the United States Midwest, using five scales to explore differences in attachment patterns, attachment histories, levels of physical violence, violence in their families of origin and reported levels of life stressors. They found that violent males were more likely to exhibit insecure attachment styles and aspects of fearful attachment styles. They were likely to become violent as a result of feelings of insecurity. Fearfully attached individuals expect rejection and are distrusting in their intimate relationships. As a result they may misperceive behaviours of the female partner as rejection and resort to violence. The researchers also showed how female adult attachment may be related to male violence. Men who had partners with low secure style attachment, higher dismissing style and lower preoccupied style were more likely to be violent toward their partners. As Kesner and McKenry (1998) reported: “Couples with differing attachment styles may actually antagonize each other unintentionally, thus escalating aggression into

violence” (p. 421). Although attachment styles may be an important psychological marker, the research in this area does not focus on the context of the man’s violent behaviour toward his partner.

2.1.1.2 Anger and Impulsivity

Violent men have also been reported to be more hostile, angry and aggressive than their non-violent counterparts (Kane & Staiger, 2000). McKenry, Julian and Gavazzi (1995) compared 34 violent to 68 non-violent couples and found that hostility was positively correlated with the level of physical violence by the husband. Dutton, Saunders, Starzomski and Bartholomew (1994) found that maritally violent men in treatment scored higher on a measure of anger than did a non-violent comparison group and Jacobson et al. (1994) found that violent husbands displayed more contempt during marital interactions than non-violent, distressed men. In the same vein, Hamberger and Hastings (1991) found that, on the *Million Clinical Multiaxial Inventory* (MCMI; Million, 1983 cited in Hamberger & Hastings, 1991), abusive men obtained higher scores on scales relating to aggressiveness and passive-aggressiveness, compared to a group of non-violent men.

The typology of violent men offered by Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart (1994) (see section 2.1.1.4) also purports that violent men may differ on levels of impulsivity i.e. that family-only batterers would be the least impulsive whereas generally violent/antisocial men would be the most impulsive. Impulsivity has also been associated with criminality (Blackburn & Coid, 1998). These intra-psychological characteristics may provide important information about the particular ‘sparks’ for violence in some men but, as Adams (1990) cautioned, certain emotional factors such as a lack of impulse control, dependency, anger or insecurity may be present when some men commit violence against women but cannot be adequately used as a causal explanation for violence. Some men who are insecure, dependent, angry and lack impulse control, do not beat women partners.

2.1.1.3 Personal Control

Personal control is another psychological aspect that has been associated with men’s perpetration of violence against women. Petrik, Petrik Olson and Subotnik (1994) studied the personality characteristics of abusers with regard to control issues. In their analysis of 18

couples, abusers described feeling powerless and they had a low tolerance for being controlled. Women partners also felt powerless but had a moderate tolerance for being controlled. Rosenbaum and O'Leary (1981 cited in Hamberger & Hastings, 1991) found that, compared to non-violent men, violent men had greater deficits in assertiveness and greater needs for power. In these studies, control and powerlessness were perceived as intra-psychic phenomena. Powerlessness and control based upon social-structural or cultural factors were not taken into account. Umberson, Anderson, Glick and Shapiro (1998) on the other hand, conceived of personal control as a belief that one's intentions and behaviour could impose control over one's environment. They also considered that aspects of the socio-structural environment might affect the emotional state of individuals. Umberson et al. (1998) used data from a United States national survey to assess whether acts of domestic violence were associated with a sense of personal control; whether a partners' act of violence was associated with the respondents' sense of personal control; whether there were gender differences in the association of respondents' acts of domestic violence with their sense of personal control and whether there were gender differences in the association of partners' acts of domestic violence with respondents' personal control. They found that perpetrating domestic violence was not associated with personal control for either men or women but that being the victim of domestic violence was associated with a reduced sense of personal control (only for women). The results of their study did not support the assertion that men who engage in domestic violence experience an enhanced sense of personal control as a result. They concluded that only in some cases might personal control be associated with domestic violence (e.g. perceived threats to masculinity or for individuals who have little self-control). Thus, if men perceive threats to their sense of masculinity (e.g. powerlessness in the socio-structural arena due to poverty or marginalisation), this might intersect with personal control and may lead to some men perpetrating violence against women partners. Personal control then, as an intra-psychological issue, should also be examined within the broader socio-cultural and structural context.

2.1.1.4 Psychological Types of Violent Men

A number of researchers have challenged the assumption of homogeneity amongst all domestically violent men (Dixon & Browne, 2003; Gondolf, 1999; Holtzworth-Munroe, Bates et al., 1997). Research has shown that there are important differences amongst violent men. These differences relate to the frequency with which they perpetrate violence as well as

the generality (or type) of the violence. Awareness of these differences has led to research that explores the various subtypes of abusive men.

Early typology research pointed to the existence of two 'types' of violent men, namely the instrumental batterer and the impulsive batterer (Holtzworth-Munroe, Bates, et al., 1997). The instrumental (narcissistic or antisocial) batterer displayed violence both inside and outside the family. The impulsive (borderline or emotionally volatile) batterer had high scores on anger and depression and was primarily psychologically abusive.

A different typology has been suggested by Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart (1994) who proposed a theoretical model delineating different types of abusive men on the basis of the existing literature in the field. They showed that violent men were usually categorised into groups based upon three descriptive dimensions namely, the severity and frequency of the violence; the generality of the violence (e.g. family-only or general violence); and the abuser's personality disorders or levels of psychopathology. Based upon these dimensions, Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart (1994) delineated a typology of three subtypes of batterers namely, family-only, dysphoric-borderline and generally violent-antisocial. Family-only batterers were expected to be the least violent both inside and outside the home. They were also expected to engage in the lowest levels of psychological and sexual abuse. Family-only batterers were also expected to present the lowest levels of psychopathology and no personality disorders. The second category of batterers, namely 'dysphoric-borderline' was those who were expected to engage in moderate violence in the family and some, but minimal violence outside the home. They were also expected to be the most psychologically distressed (depression, anxiety) and the most likely to exhibit borderline characteristics (emotional lability; unstable relationships; fear of rejection) (Holtzworth-Munroe, 2000). Generally violent-antisocial batterers were expected to be the most violent, inside and outside the home. They were most likely to possess characteristics of antisocial personality disorder, such as criminal behaviour, substance abuse, or prior arrests.

Based upon their review, Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart (1994) proposed that 50% of abusive men would be family-only batterers, 25% would fall into the generally violent/antisocial category and 25% in the dysphoric/borderline category. These three subtypes of batterers were integrated into a model highlighting risk factors and the developmental course of violence. Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart (1994) identified

individual variables (risk factors) that were related to the use of violence by each subtype of batterer. These included both distal (e.g. genetic influences, childhood family history and peer experiences) and proximal (e.g. attachment, impulsivity, social skills and attitudes) factors. The authors argued that each subtype of batterer would vary along a number of variables. Generally violent/antisocial men for example, would have higher levels of anger and impulsivity and would be more likely to display dismissive attachments toward their partners. The variables in the model would combine to increase the risk of violence in different groups. In sum, they proposed that family-only batterers would be the least deviant on the variables outlined and that dysphoric/borderline batterers would display moderate to high scores on the variables. Generally violent/antisocial batterers would have the highest combination and most severe levels of distal and proximal variables.

In the United States Hamberger, Lohr, Bonge and Tolin (1996) tested the Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart (1994) typology and compared violent men on measures of severity, frequency and generality of the violence. They also looked at differences between groups in terms of variables such as anger, depression, alcohol abuse and criminal involvement. Their sample consisted of 833 men who were court-referred for assessment to participate in a domestic violence programme. Levels of relationship violence were assessed via the *Conflict Tactics Scale* (Straus, 1979). Results were obtained from the man and, where possible from the woman partner (n = 276). Generality of the violence and alcohol abuse were assessed through self-reports by the abuser. Other forms of assessment included police records and psychometric evaluations (to assess personality disorders, depression, anger and socially desirable responding). Hamberger et al. (1996) assessed personality pathology with the MCMI (Million, 1983 cited in Hamberger et al., 1996) and performed a cluster analysis on the eight personality pattern scales to classify the sample of batterers.

Three significant clusters emerged. Men in cluster three evidenced low levels of pathology, the lowest depression and anger scores and the lowest frequency and severity of violence. They were least likely to have alcohol problems and experienced and witnessed the lowest levels of violence in their families of origin. They were also more likely to restrict their violence to intimate partners and had minimal problems with the law. Hamberger et al. (1996) proposed that this group was closest to the family-only batterers outlined by Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart (1994).

Hamberger et al. (1996) aligned the cluster two group with the generally violent/antisocial group described by Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart (1994). This group had higher scores on the antisocial, narcissistic and histrionic subscales of the MCMI. They reported themselves as significantly more anger prone and had higher levels of drug abuse. This group reported more frequent and severe violence as well as violence outside the home and more police contact than the other groups.

Hamberger et al. (1996) named the men in cluster one the “Negativistic-Dependent group” and found that they were most similar to the Dysphoric/Borderline subtype. They had a higher score on the Borderline-Cycloid scale and higher levels of depression than both clusters two and three. They reported more child abuse victimisation and high levels of drug and alcohol abuse. They scored higher on rates of partner-only violence and higher on extra-familial violence. They were intermediate with respect to the generality of violence and police contact.

The typology model of Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart (1994) would predict that cluster two (Generally violent/antisocial) batterers would have a higher score on the alcohol abuse and drug abuse scales than cluster one (Dysphoric/borderline). However, Hamberger et al. (1996) found that men in cluster one scored higher on the alcohol abuse scale than those in cluster two and that there were no significant differences on the drug abuse scales. Contrary to the model, they also found that cluster one and two men did not differ significantly on variables such as anger proneness, maximum violence, social desirability and frequency of violence. Notwithstanding these differences between the Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart (1994) model and their own findings, Hamberger and colleagues (1996) concluded that the overall results (with a very large sample size) provided strong support for the batterer typology. The study, however, only included a clinical sample, which limited its generalisability. It also did not include a comparison group of non-violent men.

Although not a direct test of the Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart (1994) model, Tweed and Dutton (1998) compared two types of batterers namely, Type 1 (antisocial/instrumental) and Type 2 (impulsive). They aimed to clarify the distinctions between impulsive (dysphoric/borderline) and instrumental (antisocial) batterers on a number of characteristics in 79 physically abusive men referred to a domestic violence programme. Tweed and Dutton (1998) addressed a shortcoming of the Hamberger et al. (1996) study by comparing their

sample to a matched, non-violent control group of 44 men. They employed a number of measures to assess attachment styles, personality pathology, violence in relationships, anger, borderline personality characteristics and trauma symptoms. A cluster analysis of the MCMI-II (Million, 1987 cited in Tweed & Dutton) yielded two distinct clusters, labelled as instrumental (n=32) and impulsive (n=38). The instrumental group scored lower (than the impulsive and control groups) on measures of affect such as anxiety, depression or dysthymia but scored highest on marital violence. They also reported preoccupied attachment styles, suggesting that men were possibly preoccupied with maintaining dominance and control in their relationships (Tweed & Dutton, 1998). This group also reported low levels of trauma symptoms and a narcissistic-aggressive-antisocial personality profile. The impulsive group expressed more fearful attachment styles (than the instrumental and control groups) and scored significantly higher on the Borderline Personality Organization scale. They reported elevated depression, anger, anxiety and trauma symptoms. The impulsive group evidenced a borderline, avoidant and passive-aggressive personality profile. Overall, the groups differed in terms of levels of violence (with instrumental men reporting more marital violence). The study also found a high prevalence of personality disorders amongst the abusive men.

Waltz, Babcock, Jacobson and Gottman (2000) sought to test the typology proposed by Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart (1994) in a community sample of abusive men in the United States. They also aimed to assess whether the 'types' of batterers would differ in terms of the distal and proximal variables outlined in the model. Waltz et al.'s (2000) study included measures of all three dimensions of the model, namely the severity of violence, the generality of violence and psychopathology. They employed a community sample as well as victim reports of perpetrator behaviour. The study utilised a non-violent comparison group and was comprised of 75 violent and 32 non-violent, maritally distressed couples. Of the violent group, 51 were domestically violent and 24 presented with low-level violence. In the sample, 24% of the 75 violent men emerged as generally violent, 23% were classified as pathological and 40% as family-only batterers. As expected a large proportion of the family-only batterers came from the original low-level violence group (83%) and a large proportion of the generally violent group came from the domestic violence sample (89%). Interestingly they found no significant differences between the violent and non-violent groups in the experience of physical abuse as a child. They did, however, find that the groups differed in terms of the frequency and severity of witnessing parental violence in the family of origin (generally violent and pathological batterers witnessed the most frequent and severe violence).

Generally violent and pathological men were, according to their wives, significantly more emotionally abusive than family-only batterers. Women reported that pathological batterers were more jealous than the generally violent men and that family-only batterers were more emotionally abusive than the non-violent group. Generally violent men revealed significantly more avoidant and less anxious attachment patterns than pathological men. Pathological batterers reported more anxious ambivalent attachment styles. Family-only batterers were distinguished from the non-violent group through higher levels of compulsive care seeking. On five scales of the MCMI-II (namely Alcohol Dependence; Drug Dependence; Narcissistic; Aggressive-Sadistic; and Schizotypal scales) generally violent and pathological groups were significantly different from the family-only batterers. Pathological men also scored significantly higher on the Aggressive-Sadistic and Narcissistic scales than generally violent batterers.

In sum, Waltz and colleagues' (2000) study provided empirical support for the tripartite classification of violent men, as well as the differences between them in terms of distal and proximal correlates. However, clear psychopathological distinctions between the generally violent (severely violent) and pathological (moderately violent) men were not found. Waltz et al. (2000) found that pathological batterers scored high on scales that were hypothesised to apply to generally violent batterers only (e.g. Antisocial, Aggressive-Sadistic and Narcissistic). Due to these findings, and given that other studies also failed to distinguish between these two subtypes, They concluded that attachment styles may provide a better etiological framework than Axis II pathology (e.g. antisocial, narcissistic or aggressive-sadistic personality disorder) on the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) (American Psychiatric Association, 1994).

In another test of the typology model, Holtzworth-Munroe, Meehan, Herron, Rehman and Stuart (2000) recruited a community sample of 102 North American couples where the man had abused a woman partner within the past year plus two non-violent comparison samples (maritally distressed and martially satisfied). The authors attempted to overcome some of the limitations of previous research, such as recruiting a community, rather than a clinical sample, employing a non-violent comparison group, utilising multiple measures of each construct and obtaining partner-reports and other objective material in order to verify men's self-reports. They used a number of methods and measures to assess the severity and generality of men's violence, personality disorders, family of origin environment, association

with deviant peers, attachment-dependency-jealousy, impulsivity, social skills and attitudes toward violence and gender roles. Using the descriptive measures of the various sub-groups they found that the three predicted subtypes emerged, in addition to another group of men. The subgroups differed along the descriptive dimensions (marital violence, general violence, personality disorder) and along the developmental model's correlates of violence (childhood environment, association with deviant peers, impulsivity, attachment, skills, attitudes). The fourth group was described as the low-level antisocial group and they exhibited moderate scores on measures of antisociality, marital violence and general violence.

Holtzworth-Munroe et al. (2000) conceptualised three of their subtypes (family-only; low-level antisocial and generally violent-antisocial) as occurring along a continuum of anti-sociality. Family only batterers had the lowest levels of violence and antisocial behaviour and the lowest risk factors for violence. The generally violent/antisocial man had the highest levels of violence and antisocial behaviour and the low-level antisocial batterer had intermediate levels. The dysphoric-borderline batterer could not be placed along this continuum – as he scored the highest on variables such as fear of abandonment, preoccupied or fearful attachment and dependency. As a result, they suggested that two dimensions be employed to categorise subgroups of batterers (namely, anti-sociality and borderline personality characteristics). Holtzworth-Munroe et al. (2000) also argued that their four-cluster typology had implications for research on the different types of violence in relationships, such as the difference between severe violence (perpetrated by generally violent/antisocial batterers) and minor violence (perpetrated by family only batterers).

In a recent review, Dixon and Browne (2003) concluded that existing research provides overall support for the Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart (1994) batterer typology, although studies show differences between court and volunteer study referrals. They asserted that the majority of studies on batterer typologies have been conducted in North America, with small sample sizes. Typology research may be criticised for a narrow focus on intra-personal psychological characteristics of the perpetrator (ignoring the context and behaviour of the victim) (Dixon & Browne, 2003). If the focus remains on the characteristics of the perpetrator, victim and situational dynamics, which may be important, are overlooked. The implication of this is that, while differences between batterers are acknowledged, all victims and 'violent couples' and violent contexts are viewed as homogenous.

Notwithstanding the limitations of typology research, an important advancement in the field is the finding that abusive men are not homogenous, both in terms of their personality characteristics as well as the types of violence they perpetrate. The research also underscores that there are a number of risk factors that might be fundamentally different for each subtype of abusive man and thus, that the focus on risk factors likely to apply to all abusive men may be problematic. Some typology research also goes further than a mere intra-psychological explanation of men's violence by exploring factors in the individual's environment, such as criminal involvement, association with deviant peers and attitudes toward gender and violence (Holtzworth-Munroe et al., 2000).

The preceding section showed how a focus on the individual-psychological characteristics of abusive men illuminated a number of factors that might explain why some men perpetrate violence against their partners. However, these psychological characteristics, by themselves, cannot account for all the variation in men's violence. The mainstream research on abused women follows a similar trajectory and has focussed on the psychological disposition of women in abusive relationships. However, this tradition of research has been preoccupied with questions of why women stay or become involved with abusive partners and how they cope with the violence.

2.1.2 Victim Psychology

The study of the psychological disposition of the abused woman is quite controversial (Holtzworth-Munroe, Smutzler & Sandin, 1997). Psychological profiles of violent men have been viewed as 'causes' of their behaviour whereas women's psychological characteristics have been viewed as precipitators to the abuse. As it will be shown in the following section, early psychological accounts seemed to suggest that women were responsible for their own victimisation by drawing on discourses of masochism and psychological deviance.

2.1.2.1 Victim Psychopathology

Snell, Rosenwald and Robey (1964) studied 12 couples where men had abused their partners. The researchers characterised the women as aggressive, efficient, masculine, sexually frigid and controlling but also dependent. Male partners were described as passive, indecisive and alcohol dependent. Violence in the relationship was argued to result from the interactions

between the passive man and aggressive woman, suggesting that women were responsible for masochistically provoking the abuse from their husbands. In 1975, a British psychiatrist conducted a survey with 100 women at a women's shelter (Gayford, 1975). He primarily provided descriptive data and focussed on the background information (such as extra-marital pregnancies and affairs and premarital sex) of the abused women. Gayford (1975) depicted battered women as both psychologically and socially deviant, suggesting that they masochistically seek out abusive relationships and provoke violence from their partners. The views of these psychiatric experts exemplified the earliest stance on the psychological disposition of abused women.

Although the research has shifted from the initial focus on women's masochism and the suggestion that women provoke the violence from their partners, discourses of pathology have persisted in the literature on the psychology of abused women. Women have been labelled with 'disorders' such as battered women's syndrome, self-defeating personality disorder and co-dependency (Westlund, 1999). The social, political and broader implications of these diagnostic labels were very often overlooked. Holtzworth-Munroe, Smutzler, et al. (1997) stated that diagnostic labelling of abused women might also have positive connotations in that it may facilitate treatment planning and it may demonstrate that intimate violence has a deleterious effect on women's mental health. Notwithstanding these advantages, disagreements about the utility of diagnostic labelling persist. Evidence of pathology should be viewed as a 'consequence', rather than a 'cause' of battering and, thus as a common human response to trauma (Holtzworth-Munroe, Smutzler, et al., 1997). However, a disparity is evident in viewing men's psychological states as a 'cause' whereas women's psychological states are viewed as a 'consequence' of violence, and suggests that different criteria are applied to women and men.

Rosewater (1990) explored whether a clinical pattern emerged for 118 abused women who were assessed on the *Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory* (MMPI; Hathaway & McKinney, 1967 cited in Rosewater, 1990). The profile for battered women included anger, confusion, fearfulness, weakness and pessimism, which she interpreted as reactive to, rather than a cause of women's victimisation. A large proportion of women also had elevated alcoholism scores. Rosewater (1990) found similarities between the profile of battered women in her study and a group of female schizophrenics, remarking on the danger that abused women may be misdiagnosed with schizophrenia or other mental disorders. She

attempted to challenge the utility of psychiatric labels applied to abused women, arguing that women are re-victimised by the labelling/diagnostic process. Despite this critique, researchers have continued to explore the psychopathologies of abused women.

Gleason (1993), for example, explored the prevalence of mental disorders in two samples of abused women: 30 who were living in a shelter and 32 who sought help from an agency but were living at home. This sample was compared to a randomised comparison group from a national epidemiological study (n=10,953). A large majority (88%) of abused women reported a lifetime prevalence of psychosexual dysfunction (i.e. little interest in sex, painful sex, inability to orgasm and lack of sexual pleasure). Through his comparison of the two groups of battered women with the epidemiological sample, Gleason (1993) found higher rates of many mental disorders such as major depression, generalised anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in battered women. He also found higher rates of alcohol and drug abuse or dependence. Differences were also found in levels of antisocial personality disorder and phobic disorders. Gleason (1993) argued that the diagnosis of generalised anxiety, major depression, obsessive-compulsion and posttraumatic stress may form the basis of the abused woman's psychological disposition.

In a similar manner, Cascardi, O'Leary, Lawrence and Schlee (1995) compared abused women to those in maritally distressed but non-violent relationships on rates of childhood victimisation, abuse characteristics, anxiety and affective disorders. The sample consisted of three groups of women, namely abused (n=49), maritally distressed (n=23) and a control group of maritally satisfied, non-abused women (n=25). Abused women and distressed women reported significantly more spouse specific fear than the control group. Abused women also reported more psychological coercion and aggression than the other two groups. Contrary to theories about re-victimisation Cascardi et al. (1995) did not find significantly different rates of physical and sexual childhood abuse across the three groups, although they did find that abused and maritally distressed women perceived themselves as having experienced more emotional abuse in their families of origin. Maritally discordant and abused women evidenced elevated rates of depression, panic disorder and generalised anxiety disorder and abused women displayed higher rates of current PTSD than the other two groups.

Coolidge and Anderson (2002) examined the levels of psychopathology and backgrounds of 33 women who had been in single and 42 women who had been in multiple abusive relationships, compared to a control group of 54 women. The women in multiple abusive relationships had the highest rates of psychopathology compared to women in the single abusive relationship group and women in the control group. Women in the multiple abusive group obtained higher scores on scales measuring self-defeating attitudes, dependency, paranoia, depression and PTSD. They also had greater rates of psychological maladjustment. Coolidge and Anderson (2002) also found that women in single abusive relationships did not differ significantly from women in the control group (with matched marital histories). The authors argued that abused women are not homogenous and, although their research design did not allow for cause-and-effect examinations they suggested that some women in multiple abusive relationships may have had pre-existing personality disorders whereas others might have developed these as a result of the abusive situations. Although the authors argued that they could not infer cause-effect relationships between women's psychopathology and the violence, the search for differences between women in single and those in multiple abusive relationships already presupposes etiology and contributes to stereotypes about abused women as responsible for the violence.

Diagnostic labelling, although helpful for treatment planning and symptom identification, may be harmful to abused women. The research does, however, show that women in fact do experience a range of negative symptoms as a result of the violence perpetrated against them. These include anxiety, depression, dissociation, helplessness, psychosomatic complaints, sleep and appetite disturbances, self-blame, guilt and other severe stress reactions (Astin, Lawrence & Foy, 1993; Walker, 1979). For this reason, it would be important to explore women's experiences with regard to these symptoms. Notwithstanding the disagreements over the utility of diagnostic labelling, the symptoms battered women experience as a consequence of the violation and trauma of battering cannot be overlooked if one is to adequately understand the position of women in these relationships. The danger is that these psychological symptoms are studied in isolation and that the broader context and dynamics of the abuse are ignored. Depression and PTSD are the two most common diagnoses associated with women in violent relationships. These will be examined below.

2.1.2.2 Depression

Given the debilitating effects of violence perpetrated by an intimate partner, it is expected that women in abusive relationships would present with high levels of depression. Gleason (1993) found a lifetime prevalence rate of major depression of 63% in a shelter sample of 30 women and 81% in a non-shelter sample of abused women. Cascardi et al. (1995) found that 58% of abused women in their sample and 48% of maritally distressed women had experienced at least one episode of major depression in their lifetimes. These women also had higher rates of depression than a non-violent, maritally satisfied control group. Researchers have also explored associated risk factors (for depression) as well as the co-morbidity between depression and other psychological diagnoses in abused women.

Caetano and Cunradi (2003), for example, investigated whether depression was an outcome of intimate partner violence while considering other factors also associated with depression, such as alcohol, socio-demographic or contextual variables. Their sample included 1,635 couples in the United States but their analysis focused on individual, rather than couple level factors. Their results showed that the prevalence of depression was higher for women *and* men in the violent compared to the non-violent groups. In the study, violence included both male-to-female (MFPV) and female-to-male partner violence (FMPV). Caetano and Cunradi (2003) also found that, independent of whether they reported violence or not, the rates of depression were also higher in minority (Hispanic and black) women. The results also showed that men involved in relationships with FMPV were two times more likely than men not involved in a violent relationship to be depressed, showing that men may experience similar consequences to women as a result of violence. Although depression is an individual psychological factor, the finding that rates of depression were higher in minority groups suggests that the socio-cultural environment may be an important factor.

Cascardi, O'Leary and Schlee (1999) explored the co-occurrence of Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) and PTSD in physically abused women. They also aimed to identify the predictors of depression and PTSD symptom frequency and severity. They obtained clinical data from 84 women, of which 32% met the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (Third Edition-Revised; DSM-III-R) diagnostic criteria for MDD and 29.8% met the criteria for PTSD. They found a significant association between MDD and PTSD diagnoses and 17% of women met the criteria for both disorders. Factors that predicted

depressive symptoms were marital discord and the frequency of severe husband aggression. Factors found to predict PTSD were the frequency of the partners' domination/isolation and the frequency of severe aggression. Cascardi et al. (1999) argued that physical abuse, domination and isolation lead to spouse-specific fear, which in turn led to the development of PTSD. Similarly, Stein and Kennedy (2001) reported that on a lifetime basis, 68% of their sample of 44 women who experienced woman abuse also experienced MDD, and 50% experienced PTSD. Forty-two percent of their sample also experienced MDD and current abuse related PTSD. Major depression was strongly associated with the existence of violence-related PTSD and rarely occurred on its own. These studies show that MDD and PTSD are common responses to violence and that these diagnoses often co-occur.

Studies have also examined the developmental course of depression in abused women. Clements, Sabourin and Spiby (2004), for example, argued that two factors might influence whether a woman develops depressive symptoms after battering, namely, the degree of effective coping and perceived control over the abuse. They assessed coping, perceived control, dysphoria, hopelessness and self-esteem in a shelter sample of 100 abused women. Clements et al. (2004) argued that individuals are vulnerable to hopelessness depression (a specific type of depressive disorder) if they believe that negative life outcomes are likely and that they will be helpless in preventing these outcomes. Questionnaire measures were used to assess self-esteem, coping, abuse, depression, hopelessness and perceived control. Participants in the study reported moderate to severe levels of dysphoria and low self-esteem. Women who expected that they could control future abuse reported higher self-esteem, less dysphoria and hopelessness. Ineffective coping strategies such as drug use, denial, disengagement and self-blame were associated with increased dysphoria, hopelessness and lower self-esteem.

High rates of depression are common in samples of abused women and have come to be viewed as a consequence of men's violence toward them. Caetano and Cunradi's (2003) finding that Hispanic and black women showed higher rates of depression (independent of reports of violence) show that the psychological symptom (depression) cannot be studied without placing it in its broader socio-cultural and structural context, a context in which minority groups are disenfranchised and marginalized.

2.1.2.3 Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

PTSD has been described as the clinical diagnosis that most accurately describes the psychological dynamics of abused women (Rosewater, 1990). Research on the association between women's experiences of violence and PTSD started with Walker (1979, 1984, 1991) who explored the psychological states of abused women from a feminist perspective, attempting to overcome the masochistic, victim-blaming biases characteristic of earlier approaches. She proposed that battered women present with a syndrome of psychological symptoms after they have been repeatedly subjected to physical, sexual and other forms of abuse, and coined the term, 'Battered Woman's Syndrome'. Walker conceived of this syndrome as a subtype of PTSD, as women frequently displayed the core symptoms of arousal, avoidance and intrusive memories characteristic of PTSD. Walker's 'Battered Woman's Syndrome' has been employed mainly in the legal sphere to defend women who have used lethal forms of violence against their abusive partners¹. Researchers have examined the prevalence of PTSD amongst abused women and explored associated symptoms such as increased arousal, avoidance, re-experiencing trauma, extreme fear and helplessness (Holtzworth-Munroe, Smutzler, et al., 1997).

In general, studies have found a high prevalence of PTSD in samples of abused women. In a shelter sample of 77 abused women, Kemp, Rawlings and Green (1991) found that 84% met the DSM-III-R diagnostic criteria for PTSD. The extent of the abuse was related to the presence and the degree of PTSD, depression, anxiety and overall symptom distress. Gleason (1993) found a lifetime prevalence rate of PTSD of 40% in 30 women who were living in a shelter and 31% in 32 women who did not live at the shelter but also sought assistance for domestic violence. Kemp, Green, Hovanitz and Rawlings (1995) recruited 179 battered women and 48 nonbattered but verbally abused women from a number of sources. Eighty-one percent of abused women and 63% of the verbally abused women met the criteria for PTSD. Kemp et al. (1995) compared physically abused women with and without PTSD and found that those who developed PTSD experienced more physical violence, verbal abuse, injuries, greater threat and more sexual coercion – illuminating the importance of violence severity in determining the outcome of PTSD.

¹ Interestingly, the labelling of abused women through the 'Battered Woman's Syndrome' has both positive and negative aspects. It is negatively associated with labelling and diagnosis but it also assists women in legal defences after they have killed their abusive partners.

Astin, Lawrence and Foy (1993) attempted to explore the prevalence of PTSD rates and the relationship between PTSD symptomology and the amount of exposure to violence in a sample of women from community clinics and domestic violence shelters (n=53). More specifically, they explored whether high levels of negative life events and family stressors would be associated with higher levels of PTSD and whether high levels of social support and positive life events would be associated with lower levels of PTSD. Women completed measures assessing PTSD symptomology, violence exposure, social support and life events. Based upon the results of two measures of PTSD, Astin et al. (1993) found that 33% of the sample could be diagnosed with PTSD according to DSM-III-R criteria. They also found that the severity of women's exposure to violence and the recency of the abuse were both related to PTSD symptomology. They found that a range of pre and post trauma variables was also related to symptom severity. In addition, as hypothesized, they found that available social support and positive life events were negatively related to PTSD intensity and negative life events and family stressors were positively correlated.

Saunders (1994) compared women who had sought help at domestic violence agencies with women who sought help at other agencies (e.g. victim support programmes, individual or group counselling) – on measures of posttraumatic stress and fear. He aimed to describe the symptom profiles of the different groups of women (n=192). Firstly, Saunders (1994) found that the two groups of women differed significantly in terms of the frequency and severity of the violence they encountered in their relationships. Women who sought assistance at the domestic violence programmes experienced more frequent and severe abuse. The most common symptom of PTSD experienced by both groups of women was intrusive memories of the abuse, experienced by 90% of the sample. Other symptoms which were related to the abuse included avoidance behaviours, hyper-arousal and nightmares. Overall, 60% of women in the domestic violence group and 62% of women in the non-domestic violence group could be clinically diagnosed with PTSD. Saunders' (1994) study was different from others in the area in that he constructed a specific PTSD scale to measure PTSD in relation to domestic violence, whereas other studies employed a general measure of PTSD related to any type of trauma (e.g. war, rape). Saunders' (1994) scale included diagnostic criteria from the DSM-III-R but was specifically related to abuse (e.g. upsetting dreams about the abuse and less interest in important activities since the abuse). Although the rates of PTSD amongst the two groups were similar, their symptom profiles differed in that the domestic violence group experienced more unpleasant memories or amnesia related to the abuse, were more hyper-

aroused and more likely to withdraw from activities. In other words, they experienced more intrusive and avoidant symptoms. The results of the study support the idea of a continuum of traumatic experiences for battered women (Saunders, 1994) and the idea that the abuse is not a singular event. It also relates to a more general critique of the diagnosis of PTSD and its applicability to a variety of traumatic experiences, ranging from rape and abuse to war and natural disasters.

Most of the research on the prevalence of PTSD in abused women has been conducted in the United States. In one of the few studies outside of this context, Mertin and Mohr (2000) explored the incidence of PTSD in a sample of Australian women. One hundred women were recruited through five shelters in Adelaide, Australia. A variety of measures were used to assess anxiety, depression, PTSD and violence. They found high rates of verbal abuse (71%); blaming by male partner (67%); financial control (54%); sexual coercion/demands (44%) and being shoved, pushed or grabbed (42%). Forty-five women met the DSM-IV diagnostic criteria for PTSD, with the most frequently reported symptoms being re-experiencing the trauma, avoidance of thoughts and feelings associated with the abuse and sleeping disturbances. Mertin and Mohr (2000) also examined the differences between women who met the PTSD diagnostic criteria and those who did not and found that women in the PTSD group were more likely to have partners with alcohol problems and were more likely to have believed that they would be killed by their partners. The PTSD group also scored significantly higher with regard to reported levels of violence (with more physical and verbal abuse and sexual demands/coercion). Women in the PTSD group also had significantly higher depression and anxiety scores than women in the non-PTSD group. Mertin and Mohr (2000) argued that the study's conservative rate of PTSD in abused women (45%) as compared to other studies might have been due to its strict adherence to the DSM-IV criteria. They also suggested that it was impossible to say whether the variations in the incidence rates of other studies were attributable to high-levels of violence, the particular PTSD measures employed, subjective responses of the individuals or the timing of the assessment. Their study also showed that PTSD could develop from other types of woman abuse, such as verbal abuse, blame, financial control and sexual coercion, rather than only in relation to physical abuse. The importance of this finding for woman abuse research can not be overemphasised, as it points to the damaging effects of psychological, verbal and emotional abuse on women's mental health.

In sum, the research on the relationship between PTSD and woman abuse shows that women who have been abused by their partners also present with high levels of symptoms associated with PTSD. Women are said to be responding to intensely traumatic and negative life stressors (being violated by an intimate partner) and thus their experiences are generally viewed as 'normal' responses to trauma. The research also shows that the severity of men's violence (physical and sexual) is positively related to the likelihood of women being diagnosed with PTSD, as well as with the severity of their symptoms.

The reported levels of PTSD in abused women vary substantially across studies and range from 33% to 84%. A number of reasons may account for these differences in the incidence of PTSD. The samples employed in the various studies included either groups of women who were resident at shelters or those who were recruited from the community (Mertin & Mohr, 2000). The timing of the assessment is also an important contributor to whether women will report PTSD symptoms of varying intensity (Mertin & Mohr, 2000). Further, across the studies, a range of assessment methods and instruments have been used to assess for PTSD. Research on PTSD in battered women is different from the research with other survivors of violence (e.g. war veterans, rape survivors), in that abused women experience continuous trauma over an extended period of time. They are violated by intimate partners, rather than strangers. Thus, the research on PTSD has to be expanded in order to account for the nuances in battered women's experiences.

In the preceding sections I explored the research that focused on the psychological characteristics of perpetrators and victims of woman abuse. The research showed that there are a number of significant psychological factors that may contribute to men's violence, as well as a number of consequences resulting from their violence. A general critique of the intra-psychological approach is that the broader context of behaviour is ignored. One such aspect of the broader context that is likely to influence men's violence is the family environment.

2.1.3 The Social Learning of Violence and Victimization

Bandura (1977) argued that behaviour, both positive and negative, is learned through modelling the behaviour of significant others in our environments. In terms of violence, learning theorists suggested that violent behaviour is learned through childhood models in the

family of origin. Individual men learn the 'appropriateness' of using violence as a means of conflict resolution. Through violence, men achieve particular objectives (such as getting the female partner to engage or not engage in particular behaviours) with the consequence that their violent behaviour is reinforced and would tend to persist. Social learning theory proposed that violence is learned through the observation of gendered role models (such as a violent and abusive father). Children learn how to behave on the basis of how they are treated by others and how they witness their parents treating each other. For women, witnessing a mother's victimisation or being a victim of violence in the family of origin is described as a risk factor for later victimisation within an intimate relationship. For men, on the other hand, witnessing violence perpetrated by a parent is described as a risk factor for the later perpetration of violence against an intimate woman partner. Once again, these different interpretations illuminate disparities in how women and men's perpetration and victimisation experiences have been described.

In general, researchers have accorded greater attention to men's learning of violence than to the re-victimisation of women. As a result, the findings of the latter are inconclusive. In one study, Coid, et al. (2001) assessed the prevalence of childhood and adult abusive experiences in 1,207 adult women who attended primary health care facilities in London. They found that childhood abusive experiences such as unwanted sexual contact frequently co-occurred with other forms of abuse such as physical abuse. Adult abusive experiences such as woman abuse, reported rape and sexual assault also co-occurred. The study also showed that childhood abuse in women was independently associated with adult abuse and trauma. More specifically, less severe abuse in childhood was associated with similar experiences in adulthood and more severe childhood abuse (e.g. unwanted sexual intercourse and severe physical violence) was associated with sexual and physical abuse in adulthood. In addition, they found that higher rates of re-victimisation in women were associated with high unemployment and low socio-economic status, emphasising that social factors might mediate the relationship between experiencing violence in childhood and re-victimisation in adulthood.

A key issue in this literature is that the differential effects of witnessing marital violence should be distinguished from the effects of being a victim of child abuse. Kalmus (1984) addressed this question by exploring whether witnessing marital aggression was more strongly related to perpetrating severe marital aggression in adulthood than experiencing

parental aggression. She also explored the effects of gender and whether boys witnessing their fathers abuse their mothers would be more likely to be perpetrators rather than victims and whether girls would be victims rather than perpetrators of marital violence. In a United States national sample of 1,183 women and 960 men, Kalmus (1984) obtained measures of parental hitting, parent-child hitting (during adolescence) and marital aggression (both husband to wife and wife to husband). Her results showed that both witnessing and experiencing violence in the family of origin were related to aggression by men and women, with a stronger effect for witnessing parental violence. Although the effect for witnessing was stronger, there was a substantial increase in marital aggression when respondents were exposed to both types of family violence. Consequently, Kalmus (1984) argued that family violence might involve two types of modelling – generalised and specific. In the former, violence in the family of origin communicates messages about the acceptability of the use of violence between family members. In contrast, specific modelling, which is more directly related to the intergenerational modelling of family violence, involves the modelling of specific types of family violence that one may have been exposed to. Her exploration of the gender-specific effects revealed that witnessing fathers abuse mothers increased the likelihood of husband-to-wife and wife-to-husband marital aggression, therefore consistent with general modelling. She concluded that rather than the violent behaviours being modelled along gender-specific lines (women as victims and men as perpetrators) – the modelling relates more to the acceptability of the use of violence amongst family members (parents and parent-child). Thus, Kalmus (1984) inferred that both women and men are equally likely to become perpetrators of intimate partner violence. Her findings with regard to the sex-specific nature of violence and modelling challenges the notion that children model the same-sex parent more than the opposite-sex parent and challenges the re-victimisation thesis.

While Kalmus (1984) found no gender difference in who is likely to become a perpetrator of partner violence, the effect of gender and the victim or perpetrator role is a more complex issue. In order to address these issues, Stith, Smith, Penn, Ward and Tritt (2004) conducted a meta-analysis of the current research. They aimed to assess whether family-of-origin violence significantly affected the perpetration of later violence in intimate relationships. They also aimed to identify the factors that moderated the relationship between a violent childhood home and later adult violence and victimisation. Stith et al. (2004) found that growing up in a violent home was significantly associated with perpetrating abuse against a partner. Gender had a significant effect on the relationship between growing up in the violent home and later

becoming a perpetrator. Contradicting the findings of Kalmus (1984), Stith et al. (2004) found that men were more likely than women to become perpetrators. Gender was also important for those who experienced child abuse and its relation to becoming abusive. Men were more likely to become abusive if they had experienced abuse as a child. Nonetheless, growing up in a violent home was also related to becoming a *victim* of intimate partner abuse. However, being abused as a child was more strongly related to becoming a victim of partner violence than witnessing the abuse. Perhaps the gender differences found between becoming a perpetrator or victim of violence are best explained by social learning theory – that children model the behaviour of the same-sex parent. In addition, cultural reinforcements for ‘proper’ gendered behaviour are also important. Characteristically boys, for example, are rewarded for aggressive, masculine behaviour, whereas girls are rewarded for passive, feminine behaviour, illustrating that different factors influence whether the individual becomes a perpetrator or victim of violence.

Whitfield, Anda, Dube and Felitti (2003) explored the relationship between childhood physical or sexual abuse, witnessing parental violence and the risk of intimate partner violence victimisation (in women) and perpetration (by men) in adulthood. The sample was drawn from a larger study exploring adverse childhood experiences at a health centre in San Diego, California. The sample consisted of 4,674 women and 3,955 men. Twenty-five percent of women and 28% of men had experienced childhood physical abuse. Seventeen percent of men and 24% of women had experienced childhood sexual abuse. Women were slightly more likely to have been exposed to violence against their mothers (13.9%) compared to men (12.1%). Whitfield et al. (2003) found that overall, 5% of women were at risk for victimisation and 4.3% of men were at risk for perpetration of violence in their intimate relationships. Women were defined as being at risk if they responded affirmatively to the following question: “Has your partner ever threatened, pushed or shoved you?” (Whitfield et al., 2003, p. 171). Men were defined as being at risk if they indicated a yes response to the following question: “Have you ever threatened, pushed or shoved your partner?” (Whitfield et al., 2003, p. 171). The study thus, did not assess intimate partner violence in detail. Childhood physical and sexual abuse and witnessing violence increased the risks of victimisation for women and perpetration for men. The number of violent experiences also increased victimisation risk (for women) and perpetration risk (for men) by about 60% to 70%. The authors argued that childhood trauma (experiencing and observing violence) increased the likelihood that women would be re-victimised and that men would

perpetrate violence toward women partners. Their findings confirm the assumptions of social learning theory, in that individuals are more likely to model the behaviour of their same-sex parents.

In a study amongst 1,368 municipal workers in Cape Town, South Africa, Abrahams (2002) found a number of childhood variables to be associated with the later perpetration of violence against an intimate woman partner. These included whom the man was raised by, the presence of the biological father, the emotional connection or interest expressed by the father, the frequency of physical beatings as a child and witnessing the mother being abused. Of those who witnessed their mothers being abused (23.5%), 62.4% reported physically abusing women partners. Those men who witnessed their mothers being abused also evidenced other forms of adult violence such as fights in their communities and at their places of work. The study showed that, not only does childhood violence lead to woman abuse, but it may also lead to general violence or antisocial behaviour. However, general violence or antisocial behaviour may also be a consequence or aspect of the community or social context, an aspect that was not considered in Abrahams' (2002) study. Additionally, the study showed that the absence or emotional disconnection of the man's biological father might also result in dysfunction and later violence.

It is likely that the relationship between witnessing and/or experiencing violence in one's family of origin is mediated by a number of factors, which may include cultural sanctions for violence and gender stereotypical norms. Haj-Yahia (2001) explored the effects of inter-parental violence on Arab adolescents in Israel. He employed a cross-sectional survey of 1,640 adolescents. The results of the study revealed that Arab adolescents witnessed relatively high rates of father-to-mother and mother-to-father violence, although the violence perpetrated by fathers against mothers was reported more frequently. Significant amounts of the variance in the participants' feelings of hopelessness, psychological adjustment problems and low self-esteem could be attributed to witnessing violence in their homes. The results also revealed that witnessing father-to-mother aggression had greater negative effects on the mental health of adolescents than witnessing mother-to-father aggression². Haj-Yahia (2001) pointed to the cultural context in which men's violence has become almost normalised. Within this context, adolescents who witness inter-parental violence may be more likely to

² Father-to-mother aggression is more likely to be lethal or severe as opposed to mother-to-father aggression and is thus more likely to lead to greater negative mental health consequences for those children who witness it.

perpetrate violence later in their lives. Other aspects of the socio-structural context may also affect the intergenerational transmission of violence. Coid et al. (2001) for example, showed that the re-victimisation effects are amplified for women who are unemployed and of low socio-economic status, while Bevan and Higgins (2002) found that men with a lower income reported more childhood physical abuse and greater levels of physical partner abuse.

Reitzel-Jaffe and Wolfe (2001) proposed a model to explain the relationship between violence in the family of origin and the later perpetration of violence in an intimate relationship. They argued that this relationship was likely to be mediated by three factors, namely, negative beliefs about gender, interpersonal violence and negative peer associations. In their study with 585 largely middle-class, Canadian university men, they tested the model and found that the model accounted for 79% of the variance in the measure of participants self-reported perpetration of woman abuse. They argued that stereotypical beliefs about gender (sex-role ideology), the acceptance of violence and associations with peers who condone violence and traditional sex role beliefs were important for understanding the link between witnessing violence in the family of origin and later perpetrating woman abuse. The study showed that the individual learning of violent behaviour cannot be explored in isolation, but rather that interpersonal interactions, cultural norms and beliefs are also important.

Interpersonal factors may also affect whether men who witness violence perpetrate violence against women partners. In Australia Skuja and Halford (2004) tested the developmental social learning theory of male violence, which suggests that witnessing violence in the family of origin results in the failure of men to learn effective conflict management strategies – leading to negative communication, negative affect and dominance in their intimate relationships. Sixty heterosexual dating couples were recruited (30 where men had been exposed to father-to-mother violence in their families of origin and 30 where men had not witnessed or experienced any violence in their families). They employed a number of self-report measures to assess violence in the families of origin and in current relationships, relationship satisfaction and stability, and alcohol consumption. Conflict management and communication styles in the dating couples were assessed by means of observed relationship discussions. In almost all of the exposed couples, where father-to-mother violence was present, there was also mother-to-father aggression. Of the 30 exposed couples, 63.3% reported that male violence had occurred during the past year and 60% reported that female

violence had occurred. In the unexposed group, 20% of men and 30% of women were violent in the past year. In the videotaped interactions the exposed group showed significantly more invalidation or dismissive behaviour and negative nonverbal behaviour. Exposed couples were significantly more dominating with women engaging in more dominating behaviour than men. In sum, Skuja and Halford (2004) found partial support for the theory in that exposed couples showed more negative communication and exposed men reported more negative affect and were more dominating than unexposed men. Contrary to the theory, exposed couples did not show more negative cognitions and women partners of exposed men did not differ in their subjective negative affect about their relationships.

Bevan and Higgins (2002) conducted another study in Australia to test the learning theory model of domestic violence, as well as to explore a wide range of associated risk factors. They investigated the relationships between childhood family functioning, child maltreatment, alcohol abuse, parental divorce, trauma symptomology and the perpetration of physical and psychological abuse in a sample of 36 men who had perpetrated woman abuse. Physical spouse abuse correlated significantly with childhood neglect, childhood sexual abuse, and income. Psychological abuse correlated significantly with witnessing parental violence, experiencing neglect, childhood psychological abuse and family cohesion. Trauma symptomology correlated with witnessing violence, neglect and childhood psychological abuse. Bevan and Higgins (2002) also found that witnessing family violence uniquely predicted trauma symptomology and psychological partner abuse and that childhood neglect uniquely predicted physical partner abuse. Alcohol abuse did not correlate significantly with any other study variables. The results suggest other forms of child abuse (e.g. neglect), in addition to witnessing or experiencing physical abuse as a child, may also be significant risk factors for the later perpetration of violence (Bevan & Higgins, 2002).

In general, the research supports a link between witnessing and experiencing violence in the family of origin for men and the later perpetration of woman abuse. The research also shows that this relationship may be mediated by a number of individual, interpersonal and socio-cultural factors. For women the results are less clear. Initial research has shown that women who witness or experience childhood violence are just as likely as men to be perpetrators of violence (Kalmus, 1984) whereas other research shows that women are more likely to be re-victimised (Coid et al., 2001; Stith et al., 2004; Whitfield et al., 2003).

2.1.4 Alcohol and Drug Abuse

The research on the relationship between alcohol or drug abuse and woman abuse follows two trends (Holtzworth-Munroe, Bates, et al., 1997). Firstly, researchers have examined the rates of alcohol or drug consumption in men who have been identified as violent toward their partners. Secondly, researchers have also explored the rates of partner violence in clinical samples of men with alcohol or drug abuse problems. These research endeavours locate the problem of woman abuse within the individual man who consumes or abuses alcohol or other drugs.

Bennett, Tolman, Rogalski and Srinivasaraghavan (1994) tested the hypothesis that domestic abuse levels would be higher in men who experienced violence and addiction in their families of origin, had an external locus of control and were severely abusive of alcohol or drugs in a sample of 63 men admitted to alcohol or other substance abuse treatment programmes. Twenty-one percent of the men had been arrested for violence perpetrated against a woman partner and 27% had protection or restraining orders issued against them. Sixty three percent of men reported substance abuse by at least one parental figure and one third of the men reported that they had been abused as children, while 38% had witnessed their mothers being abused. The data showed that physical or non-physical abuse of a woman partner was not directly related to the hypothesised variables. The variables that achieved significance instead were a history of drug abuse and an early onset of alcohol or drug related problems. Bennett et al's (1994) findings were in contrast to the commonly associated link between woman abuse and alcohol abuse. The study found that the more frequently the man drank, the less he abused his partner. The authors suggested that the heaviest drinkers were incapacitated by their drinking, which reduced their possibilities for domination and maltreatment against their partners. In the study, drug abuse, rather than alcohol abuse seemed to be more closely related to the perpetration of woman abuse.

In a similar vein, Johnson (2001) assessed the significance of alcohol abuse as a predictor of woman abuse in a large-scale Canadian study conducted in 1993. Violent men were described as more frequent and heavier drinkers and 25% of violent men drank at least four times per week. One half of the women, who reported violent incidents, reported that their partners had been drinking at the time of the assaults and 29% described alcohol as precipitators to the abuse. Alcohol was also mentioned in association with other factors such as jealousy or

household economics. Men who were drinking during the violence were also more likely to inflict severe violence on their partners. Johnson's (2001) results show that, men's attitudes about male control and domination seemed to be more important predictors of violence than alcohol consumption, age, type of relationship or class. Jewkes et al. (2002) explored the risk factors for domestic violence in South Africa and found that conflict over the partner's drinking as well as alcohol consumption by the woman partner were positively associated with the man's violence. Men's violence was linked to their perceptions that gender norms were transgressed through women's consumption of alcohol. The link between alcohol and violence may thus be mediated by beliefs about masculinity and masculinity may be acted out through heavy drinking and violence against women (Jewkes et al., 2002).

Caetano et al. (2000) explored the relationship between drinking and a number of related variables in a sample of 555 white, 358 black and 527 Hispanic couples in the United States. They investigated the violence perpetrated by, and the drinking patterns of, both men and women and found that during the violent event, drinking was more common amongst men than women. However, they found no consistent association between the perpetrator's drinking patterns and the occurrence of MFPV (male-to-female-partner-violence). Gender and ethnicity also seemed to be important since black and Hispanic women were significantly more likely to perpetrate FMPV (female-to-male-partner-violence) when they had been drinking. Caetano et al. (2000) concluded that the effect of drinking patterns changed by gender, across ethnic groups and for MFPV or FMPV. Consequently, they suggested that the relationship between drinking and partner violence might be situational or contextual and that a range of contextual determinants characteristic of the dyad might lead to violence in a particular relationship.

The literature suggests that, rather than simply looking at the correlation between woman abuse and men's abuse of alcohol, we should start to question how this relationship develops and what the mediating factors might be. Field, Caetano and Nelson (2004) suggested that there might be a variety of explanations for the observed association between alcohol and woman abuse. Firstly, individuals are aware of the disinhibiting effects of alcohol and act out this expectation when they have been drinking. Rather than 'actual' disinhibition caused by the chemical properties of the substance, individuals may also display 'learned disinhibition' as a result of their expectations of intoxication (Bennett, 1995). Secondly, alcohol may be used as a conscious excuse for violent behaviour (Field et al., 2004). Men may understand

that alcohol gives them a socially accepted 'time-out' that permits them to excuse their behaviour (Kantor & Straus, 1990 cited in Johnson, 2001). Thirdly, there may be common personality factors (e.g. impulsivity) associated with both violence and heavy alcohol consumption (Field et al., 2004). Cognitive distortion may also occur as a result of alcohol or substance abuse and is likely to result in poor conflict resolution strategies. In addition, the relationship between alcohol and violence may also be affected by a range of other factors and may intersect to increase a person's tendency to commit violence. Thus, the observed relationship is not necessarily directly causal (Bennett, 1995). In certain situations, drugs or alcohol may be more likely to increase the chances of men perpetrating woman abuse. These situations include: the occurrence of family of origin violence; marital conflict and power; approval of marital violence; high hostility and low self-consciousness in men; income or socio-economic status; general violence; age; personality characteristics; non-alcohol drug abuse; and the diagnosis of alcoholism (Bennett, 1995). Individual risk factors therefore need to be understood within a constellation of other individual, interpersonal or socio-cultural factors.

2.2 *Interpersonal Research on Woman Abuse*

At the interpersonal or relationship level researchers have examined how the specific details of the couple's relationship and their interactions might increase the risks of violence victimisation or perpetration. In their meta-analysis of victimisation risk factors from 85 studies, Stith et al. (2004) found that variables at the interpersonal and at the intra-individual levels were important for understanding the risk of intimate partner violence perpetration and victimisation. Variables at the interpersonal level included marital satisfaction, a woman's violence toward the man partner (reciprocal negative behaviour) and marital separation. The following section reviews research that explores the couple dynamics³ in violent relationships in order to show how it increases our understanding of a man's violence toward an intimate woman partner.

³ Although there is a body of literature (e.g. Dunbar & Burgoon, 2005; Weger, 2005) that examines couple dynamics and interaction styles in non-violent couples, this review is limited to the study of 'violent couples' as it is proposed that the use of violence by a man against a woman partner has very specific consequences for the couple's interaction styles.

2.2.1 Couple Dynamics, Conflict, Power and Interaction Styles

Wilkinson and Hamerschlag (2004) argued that, in order to understand violent events, we need to consider a range of situational determinants, including the victim-offender relationship. The category of the relationship (whether the partners are married, divorced, cohabiting or separated) is also important. Research shows that relationship status (as divorced, separated or single) may be associated with the risk of victimisation for women (Vest, Catlin, Chen & Brownson, 2002). Divorced or separated women may be at increased risk for violence and women who attempt to separate from abusive partners may also be at risk for further violence (Fleury, Sullivan & Bybee, 2000).

Other aspects of the relationship such as the perceived quality of the relationship and the relationship stage may be as important as marital or relationship status. Research shows that, once violence is used, it impacts upon the perceived quality of the relationship, which in turn may influence whether violence is used repeatedly (Eisikovits & Winstok, 2001). Marital or relationship conflict is perhaps the most important interpersonal variable related to violence perpetration and is an important marker of the quality of an intimate relationship. In intimate relationships, there are a variety of factors that have the potential to result in conflict. Therefore, the sources of marital conflict are multiple and may include conflict over the division of labour, children, financial issues, alcohol consumption, jealousy, extramarital relationships and the exertion or imbalance of control in the relationship (Dobash & Dobash, 1998). In a South African context, Abrahams, Jewkes, Hoffman and Laubsher (2004) found that two types of conflict significantly predicted men's perpetration of sexual violence against partners, namely, women refusing sexual contact and perceived challenges to men's domination in the relationship. These types of conflict were directly related to men's sexual entitlement and their dominance in intimate relationships.

Marital conflict research has distinguished between those couples who are maritally distressed (and experience high levels of conflict) and those who are not (Fincham, 2003). This distinction has been strengthened through the findings of observational research methods, which reveals that, during conflict discussions, distressed couples are more negative than non-distressed couples (Fincham, 2003). Ronan, Dreer, Dollard and Ronan (2004) also found that when 'maritally violent couples' discussed high conflict problems, they used more ineffective and negative communication strategies.

Two types of relationship communication patterns have been identified as important in 'violent' or maritally distressed couples. A cycle of escalating negative behaviour and a demand-withdraw pattern may be present (Fincham, 2003). The first approach describes violence as the result of the escalation of reciprocal negative actions, both verbal and physical. The couples' interaction represents a downward spiral where negative behaviour by one partner is followed by negative behaviour of the other partner (negative reciprocity). In the demand-withdraw interaction style, one partner makes demands (through criticism and complaints) while the other withdraws (displaying defensiveness and passivity). According to Weger (2005), "demand/withdrawal is characterized as a complimentary pattern of interaction in which one partner attempts to advance a conflict, while the other partner attempts to avoid the discussion" (p. 22). It has been suggested that it is usually the wife who demands, while the husband withdraws (Babcock, Waltz, Jacobson & Gottman, 1993), although this might not be consistent as power (actual or perceived) has a fundamental role in the interaction pattern (Sagrestano, Heavey & Christensen, 1999). The person being requested to change is likely to have more power in the relationship and s/he could decide whether they want to change or not (Sagrestano et al., 1999). The person requesting the change is likely to have less power.

Walker (1984) proposed a theory of violence where violence was perceived as the outcome of a continuous cycle of interactions between the two partners. Based upon reports of women, she suggested that violent relationships are cyclical and characterised by three phases. Firstly, the tension-building phase may include minor violence or verbal abuse. The explosive or abusive phase is characterised by an escalation and more severe abuse. This phase is followed by a calm, loving or honeymoon phase during which the abuser becomes apologetic and manipulates the woman with promises of change. In terms of Walker's scenario, the combination of women's 'learned helplessness' and the cycle of violence trap women in abusive relationships and explain why women often stay with abusive partners. Men's violent behaviour is also reinforced through the onset of the loving phase characterised by a reduction in tension (O'Neill, 1998). This aspect of the theory however has not been directly validated by men's reports of the violence, although some men report that their abusive behaviour continued because their partners 'accepted' and tolerated the violence (Wood, 2004).

In an investigation of couple relationships, Jacobson, Gottman, Gortner, Berns and Shortt (1996) followed 45 couples over a two-year period and found that over one third of the couples had ended their relationships (through separation or divorce) by the end of the two-year period. They also found that in a large proportion of the sample, physical abuse decreased but not emotional abuse. This finding points to the fact that, over the course of the relationship, it is likely that the abuse may also cease or change in shape and form. Thus, physical violence may no longer be necessary or possible (due to legal and social sanctions) and men may then employ psychological forms of abuse (Jacobson et al., 1996). The researchers attempted to distinguish between couples who stayed together (62%) and those who separated (38%) and inferred that in the marriages that ended, women were more intolerant of the abuse and defended themselves during the conflict. The husbands in these unions were more emotionally abusive and antisocial (emotional abuse was more important than physical abuse in contributing to the wives' dissatisfaction). Women defended themselves by resisting and responding assertively to their partners' criticism, contempt, belligerence and dominance (possibility moving out of the spiral of negative reciprocity and therefore being able to end the abusive relationships).

What precedes the violent episodes and what happens in the aftermath has also been the object of investigation. Research has confirmed the findings of Walker's cyclical theory by showing that physical violence is often preceded by verbal aggression⁴ (Hydén, 1994). The downward spiral of reciprocal negative behaviour may explain the way in which verbal aggression escalates into physical violence. The predictability of Walker's cycle of violence may be questioned as the aftermath phase, for example, may not only be characterised by apologies and loving contriteness. Rather, couples may employ a variety of strategies to contain the violent events (Eisikovits, 1996). These strategies may be aimed at either justifying continued joint marital life or explaining the dissolution of the relationship. Eisikovits (1996) studied 20 couples in Northern Israel who continued to live together after the violence. They used various strategies to make sense of the violence. These strategies were coherent with making continued joint marital life possible. Women's attitudes about the violence (rejecting or accepting) impacted upon the reframing strategies they employed. For the women who 'accepted' violence, it was viewed as inevitable and the aftermath did not

⁴ The escalation process from verbal to physical aggression is underpinned by the assumption that verbal abuse is less harmful and severe than physical violence, an assertion that was made problematic by the participants in the current study (see Chapter Five, Section 5.2.2.1).

involve any particular events. In the group where women rejected the violence, there was an exchange of power where women (although committed to staying together) actively employed strategies to renegotiate power in the relationship (e.g. psychologically disconnecting from her spouse, negotiating space by physically leaving the home or involving an audience in the relationship). These strategies temporarily shifted the balance of power in the relationship.

In another study, Eisikovits and Winstok (2001) explored the process whereby violence escalates and suggested that the structure and dynamics of relationship events are stored in an archive from which men draw memories of the intimate relationship. The archive stores the memories that feed into the process of escalating violence. They illustrated that men and women may perceive behaviours differently and that if men perceive women's behaviour as a threat they may be more likely to respond violently. How men will respond depends upon the previous memories stored in the archive and whether men perceive that women have reached their 'credit limit'. Eisikovits and Winstok's (2001) analysis offers an important interpretive account of what might feed into and influence the violent escalation process.

As the research indicates, in some cases marital conflict results in violence. One such type of violence is conceptualised as 'common couple violence' described as the "dynamic in which conflict occasionally gets 'out of hand,' leading usually to 'minor' forms of violence, and more rarely escalating into serious, sometimes even life-threatening forms of violence" (Johnson, 1995, p. 285). Olson (2002) explored this type of violence in an interpretive fashion in a mixed sample of 142 individuals. A majority of this group (57.8%) experienced aggression or violence in their relationships. Follow-up, in-depth interviews were conducted with 31 people from the original sample (5 men and 26 women) who had experienced aggression in their relationships. The analysis revealed that some acts of verbal aggression were reciprocated with either verbal or physical aggression. When aggression was not reciprocated, it was often due to fear of further retaliation from the aggressive partner. Olson's (2002) results point to an interaction between reciprocity, power and control, and aggression levels. She distinguished between abusive, violent and aggressive relationships. Abusive relationships were characterised by imbalances of power and control maintained by one partner and, in which communication patterns were domineering-submissive. Violent relationships were characterised by a dyadic pattern of control in which both partners fought for control/power, resulting in reciprocated aggression and violence. These relationships were

also characterised by wife-demand/husband-withdraw communication, where wives justified their use of violence in order to get their partners' attention. Once engaged, the conflicts would escalate. A pattern of negative reciprocity was also discerned. The third relationship type that emerged was the aggressive relationship where individuals had mutual control and reciprocated aggression. This group was different to the violent relationship in that their levels of aggression were markedly lower and they did not struggle to maintain power in the relationship. The aggressive relationship group had a low tolerance for aggression and the individuals often communicated about their conflict. Olson's (2002) research provides useful insight into the dynamics that may exist in violent relationships. She showed that the predominant interaction styles couples employ is likely to result from a number of factors, particularly power and control in the relationship. However, her use of individual perspectives to explore couple dynamics limits the study by providing a one-sided account.

Kim and Emery (2003) investigated the relationship between marital conflict, power structure, norm consensus and domestic violence in a sample of 1,279 South Korean men through telephonic surveys. Based upon the reports of men, the sample was divided into four couple types: male dominant (14.7%), female dominant (7.1%), divided power (48.8%) and equalitarian (28.5%). Divided couples shared the decision-making responsibilities according to different situations whereas equalitarian couples discussed and made decisions together. Questions on marital conflict covered three areas, namely, household economics, cleaning and cooking, and problems with children. The study found that marital power and marital conflict were significantly related and that male dominant couples had the highest rates of conflict, whereas equalitarian couples had the lowest rates. The rates of minor violence reported in the preceding year were: 27.4% (husband-to-wife), 15.5% (wife-to-husband) and 12% (mutual violence) and for severe violence: 8%, 2.8% and 1.6%, respectively. All types of violence were significantly correlated with marital power and the rates of husband-to-wife violence were highest in the male dominant couple type. As the rates of marital conflict increased, so too did the rates of both husband-to-wife and wife-to-husband violence. Higher levels of norm consensus (consensus about power) decreased levels of violence. A limitation of this research is that it employed reports of men, and as a result the levels of violence reported may have been significantly underestimated. Also, it is not unlikely that men may have perceived higher levels of shared and equal decision-making in their relationships.

Hindin and Adair (2002), in a study based in the Philippines, found that household decision-making autonomy was related to domestic violence in a complex manner. The man's control over decision-making in the relationship was likely to result in domination and violence toward women. However, when women were responsible for decision-making and were autonomous, they were also more likely to experience violence from their partners. These findings were supported in a recent Haitian study by Gage (2005), who found that, women's risks for victimisation were increased when they dominated major couple financial decisions *and* when men dominated financial decisions. Olson's (2002) study showed that in relationships of equal or balanced power, aggression and violence were more likely to be reciprocated whereas in relationships of unequal power, aggression was not reciprocated (dominance-submission). Unequal power is a relationship issue as it is mediated and negotiated between the individuals in the dyad. However, in the broader context, relationship power is also a social and structural issue in that, in heterosexual relationships it is often the man who wields or struggles for power in the relationship.

Fincham (2003) argued that understanding spouses' backgrounds and individual characteristics would enrich our current understanding of marital conflict. Marital conflict varies according to contextual factors such as external stressors related to other avenues of life (e.g. work demands or problems) and individual personality factors. Conflict should therefore be studied within the broader marital context, which is itself situated within a broader socio-cultural and ideological location. An interactionist perspective argues that battering is characterised by the couple's combined communication patterns and deficits or as a circular transaction between partners. Consequently, it is important to study couples' communication patterns and their problem-solving strategies. Calling for more research located in the interactional realm, Wilkinson and Hamerschlag (2004) suggested that research should examine the nature of the relationship and how individual level characteristics interact with the characteristics of the dyad, and how this in turn influences interaction patterns which change over time. These inter-relational characteristics, however, should also be understood within the broader socio-cultural context in which heterosexual relationships are situated.

2.3 *Sociological and Socio-Cultural Research on Woman Abuse*

Sociological researchers have explored the connections between woman abuse and variables such as age, education and socio-economic status or income. Other factors deemed important

include the cultural acceptability of violent behaviour, social norms regarding the family and community norms regarding male dominance (Heise & Garcia-Moreno, 2002).

Over the past three decades, research has revealed a consistent link between intimate partner violence and a range of socio-demographic variables. In 1975 and 1985 Straus and colleagues (Straus & Gelles, 1986; Straus et al., 1980) employed samples of 2,413 and 3,520 families respectively to measure the incidence of domestic violence in the United States. Significant correlations were observed between violence and variables such as race, age, cohabiting status, unemployment and socio-economic status (Straus et al., 1980). Higher rates of violence were found among younger, poorer, less educated, unmarried, African American, Hispanic and urban couples (Hampton & Gelles, 1994). A variety of these and other 'risk markers' have been identified as important in contexts other than North America. Place of residence (urban or rural), for example, has also emerged as an important variable in Palestinian society (Haj-Yahia, 2000a). The following section reports on a number of studies from a variety of geographical contexts that have explored the relationships between woman abuse and demographic and socio-economic variables such as age, education, income and race/ethnicity, and culture.

2.3.1 Age, Education and Income

Across studies examining risk markers for men's perpetration of violence, young age seems to emerge as a significant risk factor. The family violence surveys from the United States found that violence was more likely to occur in younger families (Straus et al., 1980). Kaufman-Kantor, Jasinki and Aldarondo (1994 cited in Holtzworth-Munroe, Bates, et al., 1997) found that men's age was a significant predictor of their perpetration of woman abuse, even while controlling for other variables. Vest et al. (2002), who obtained health related and risk behaviour information from a multi-state data collection system in the United States, found that young age was associated with increased risk of intimate partner victimisation for women.

In other contexts, the data on age seem to confirm the results from North America. In the Philippines for example, Hindin and Adair (2002) found that intimate partner violence was more common in households with younger wives and husbands. In South Africa, the findings on age are somewhat contradictory. In one study, Dawes et al. (2004) found that South

African couples who were less educated, younger and those previously married but cohabiting were more at risk of violence. Women who were younger and less educated were more likely to be victimised. In contrast, Jewkes et al. (2002) found that none of the standard socio-demographic characteristics were independently associated with woman abuse in their South African sample.

Johnson (2001) explored a range of socio-demographic variables such as age, marital status, household income, education and employment in a nationally representative Canadian sample. She found that all these variables were significant predictors of woman abuse. Age was a significant factor with men in the 18 to 24 year old age group at four times the odds of violence, and 25 to 29 year old men at three times the odds of violence compared to men in the older groups. Men with the lowest category of educational attainment were also at increased risk of using violence. Common-law (long-term cohabiting) unions and relationships of less than three years were also more likely to be violent.

Haj-Yahia (2000a) reported on the findings of two national Palestinian surveys on woman abuse. The surveys, conducted in 1994 and 1995, revealed that a number of socio-demographic variables were repeatedly correlated with men's perpetration of various forms of violence against women partners. The most important socio-demographic predictors were, place of residence (with rural women and those living in refugee camps being more vulnerable); low levels of education (for women and men); religious affiliation of the couple (Muslim women experiencing more abuse than Christian women); low income; and women's unemployment status. As stated, levels of education were identified as important for example, in the second survey, 67% of illiterate women and 62.6% of women with only primary school education experienced physical abuse, compared to 43.8% of women with some college education. Similarly, in the first survey, 60.4% of women who were illiterate and 53.6% of women with primary school education were economically abused by their partners, as compared to 40.3% of women with some college education. These national surveys also revealed that educational differences between husbands and wives were important. For example, 49% of women who had a higher educational level than their husbands reported sexual abuse, compared to 35.8% of women who had an equal level of education and 36.8% who had a lower educational level than their partners. In a recent Haitian study, Gage (2005) used data from the *2000 Haiti Demographic and Health Survey* and found that women who

failed to complete their primary schooling were at increased risk of experiencing violence from their partners.

In the World Health Organisation's (WHO) global report on violence and health, Heise and Garcia-Moreno (2002) showed that, across a range of contexts, women living in poverty are disproportionately affected by intimate partner violence. In the Philippines, Hindin and Adair (2002) found that household wealth was associated with a decreased likelihood of domestic violence. In five districts of northern India, Martin, Tsui and Maitra (1999) found that abusive men were more likely to live in poverty, have low levels of education and more than one child, and have started cohabiting at a younger age. In Peru, Gonzales de Olarte and Gavilano Llosa (1999) found that women in the lower income groups experienced more violence of all types than those in the middle-income groups. In a nationally representative sample of 2,497 South African men and women, Dawes et al. (2004) found that more men in the lower income group perpetrated violence against their partners and more women in the same group experienced and used violence. However, the relationship between poverty and violence is not an uncomplicated one and it is likely to be influenced by a number of factors. Some have argued that a greater incidence of domestic violence amongst the poorer sectors of society may reflect differential reporting, in that higher income groups are more likely to protect their privacy, less likely to come into contact with social service agencies and perhaps less likely to report violence (Gonzales de Olarte & Gavilano Llosa, 1999). Although this might be so, the consistent link between poverty and violence across a variety of contexts demands further examination.

In a large sample in the United States, Caetano et al. (2000) found that most socio-demographic variables were poor predictors of intimate partner violence across types of violence and ethnic groupings, although there was a slight indication that low household income seemed to increase the risk of violence for some groups. Using the same data set, Cunradi, Caetano, Clark and Schafer (2000) explored whether neighbourhood poverty was an important contributor to male-to-female and female-to-male intimate partner violence among white (n=555), black (n=358) and Hispanic (n=527) couples. They found that for black couples, there was a significant association between living in an impoverished neighbourhood and increased risks of MFPV and FMPV. For white couples living in impoverished communities, only the risks for FMPV were increased. For Hispanic couples, household income was a more important determinant of violence than residing in a deprived

neighbourhood. These results suggest that while poverty may be an important risk marker, race or ethnicity may also play some role. In addition, the relationship between neighbourhood poverty and violence may also be influenced by community level dynamics, such as crime, social isolation, community disintegration, unemployment and welfare dependence. In a similar vein, Miles-Doan (1998) explored whether neighbourhood context was important in explaining the variations in the rates of violence against women and found that deprived neighbourhoods had higher rates of intimate partner violence.

Cunradi et al. (2000) also showed that for Hispanic couples, age and household income were inversely related to the man's violence toward a woman partner. The man's unemployment status in black couples decreased the risk of their being violent, consistent with the findings from Lima (Gonzales de Olarte & Gavilano Llosa, 1999). In contrast to the standard assumption of a possible relationship between men's unemployment and woman abuse, Gonzales de Olarte and Gavilano Llosa (1999) found that employed men were more likely to be physically and psychologically violent than unemployed men. They suggested that unemployed men might be more dependent upon their partners' earnings and therefore less likely to use violence to alienate the partner. Moreover, Jewkes et al. (2002) found that poverty served a protective function in severely deprived South African households, where the main source of financial support was received from a third party. In these couples, conflict over resources was reduced thus reducing the potential for violence.

The research findings on poverty show that the relationship between financial resources and men's violence toward women is not a straightforward one. Poverty is likely to interact with a range of other factors increasing men's tendency toward violence. These include the frustrations and stressors associated with living in poverty, such as a lack of resources, services and opportunities, poor living conditions and a range of other social, economic and structural factors (Gonzales de Olarte & Gavilano Llosa, 1999). These factors could produce stress which may increase the tendency for marital conflict (Heise & Garcia-Moreno, 2002), which itself is a significant predictor of marital violence. In addition, some men living in poverty, or who are unemployed may experience a sense of failure for not living up to expected cultural norms of masculinity, and may attempt to exert dominance in the form of violence. Conversely, as some research shows, these unemployed men may also be more dependent on their partners' resources and thus be less likely to use violence. Poverty

provides a key example that a range of individual, situational, environmental and socio-structural issues may impact upon whether a man is violent toward a woman partner.

By acknowledging social and demographic variables, a sociological and socio-cultural analysis shifts the emphasis away from an exclusive focus on the psychology of the violent or violated individuals to acknowledgement of the social context in which violence occurs (through a focus on poverty and marginalisation, for example). The danger of placing too much emphasis on socio-demographic risk markers is that the 'violent family type' may become reified and violence may seem to be characteristic of particular strata of society, usually as referents to ethnic, racial or cultural minorities.

2.3.2 Race, Ethnicity and Culture

The *National Family Violence Surveys* in the United States were the earliest studies to point to ethnic or racial differences in the perpetration of intimate partner violence. In the first survey, conducted in 1975, Straus et al. (1980) reported that the rates of violence perpetrated against women were higher in blacks than whites. Decades later, Cunradi and her colleagues (Cunradi et al., 2000; Cunradi, Caetano & Schafer, 2002) found that amongst two minority groups in the United States (blacks and Hispanics), the rates of MFPV and FMPV were higher than for white couples. They explored how these rates were influenced by factors such as neighbourhood poverty, socio-economic status and individual variables such as alcohol problems. In contrast, Vest et al. (2002) found that after controlling for age, marital status and income, race or ethnicity was not significantly associated with intimate partner violence in eight states in the United States. Notwithstanding these contradictions, the assumption has remained that levels of violence are higher in minority groups.

In South Africa the existing research also alludes to a link between race and woman abuse. Recent research conducted by the *Medical Research Council* on intimate partner homicide, shows that coloured women are most at risk of violence from their partners (Mathews et al., 2004). Similarly, Dawes et al. (2004) found that proportionally higher numbers of African and coloured women than white and Indian women reported violence from their partners. However, as Dawes et al. (2004) suggested, the relationship between race and domestic violence may be confounded by poverty as those groups are also the most likely to be in the lower income bracket. In the South African context, with the legacy of Apartheid and the

reality of poverty and deprivation, women from underprivileged communities have limited support structures, and these factors systematically disadvantage women of colour.

In the same way that the link between woman abuse and poverty may be understood, two theories may account for why women in minority groups may experience higher rates of violence. The subculture of violence theory argues that violence may become a normative part of some group culture and approval of aggression (particularly marital aggression) may become endemic (Field & Caetano, 2004). The second theory, social-structural theory argues that, as a result of their minority status, certain groups are prone to violence due to the lack of opportunities afforded them, the multiplicity of stressors they encounter, institutionalised racism and inequalities between groups, and societal structural conditions such as poverty, unemployment or a lack of education (O'Neill, 1998). The latter theory is more likely to account for the higher incidence of violence in minority ethnic or racial groups as it provides for the possibility that higher rates of violence may be due to lower levels of education, lack of economic resources and opportunities, higher stress levels, alcohol and drug abuse, unemployment, racial discrimination, oppression, marginalisation, disempowerment and a range of other social and structural factors (Field & Caetano, 2004). It does not assume that specific groups are prone to violence as a consequence of the group composition.

The preceding sociological analysis reveals that gender is viewed as one variable amongst a number of other socio-demographic factors. As a result, men and women are viewed as both having the potential for violence (Bograd, 1990). However, the varying contexts and consequences in which these occur are often overlooked. The assumption of sexual symmetry in domestic violence has been vehemently criticised by feminist and other researchers (Dobash, Dobash, Wilson & Daly, 1992), who argued that the measures used to assess violence only focused on the violent incidents and ignored the broader context and meanings attached to violent behaviour. Feminist researchers have also argued that women's acts of self-defence may be concealed by these methods and would thus be described as female-to-male partner abuse or husband abuse.

2.3.3 The Cultural and Institutional Acceptability of Woman Abuse

Before examining the links between culture and woman abuse, it is important to note that not all cultural norms are oppressive to women, and that culture may act as a protective factor

(e.g. women may live in extended families with ample social support, emotional comfort, childcare and protection). The family network may also reduce possible social isolation. Women may draw on religious beliefs and cultural values that may assist in their coping with abusive partners. Shared values and norms provide a sense of connection to a community that may help fight against isolation. Nonetheless, research does show that in a variety of cultural contexts there are strong endorsements for male control, domination and violence against women.

In varying cultural and geographical contexts there are a variety of practices that support men's violence against women. In Bangladesh, for example, girls are discriminated against from birth (Zaman, 1999) and only until recently, the Nicaraguan Penal Code did not criminalise the violent act against a woman but rather the physical injury sustained – prescribing that the injury be severe enough to require 10 to 15 days to heal. In some countries such as Malaysia, India and Tonga, the penal codes exclude sexual intercourse by a man with his wife from the legal definition of rape (Equality Now, 2004). According to the Indian penal code, section 375 (cited in Equality Now, 2004) an exception to the definition of rape includes: “Sexual intercourse by a man with his own wife, the wife not being under fifteen years of age is not rape” (p.22). These social and institutional sanctions reinforce the subordination of women by entrenching institutionalised discrimination and denying women adequate protection from violation and abuse.

Haj-Yahia (2000b) conducted research with married Arab women in Israel and explored the relationship between wife abuse and the socio-cultural context of Arab society. In his analysis, he integrated ideas about masculine cultural constructions and the power accorded to men in Arab society. Values such as family unity and reputation are emphasised in the society and, in accordance with this, most respondents in his study advocated that women first approach their extended families for assistance with regard to violence. There was a strong emphasis on obtaining assistance from within the family and a stigma attached to seeking help from outside agencies. In a similar vein, Lui (1999) investigated woman abuse in a rural village in southeast China. Her study revealed how institutions in Chinese culture reinforced the oppression and the subservience of women. For example, cultural practices such as the dowry system reinforce the subordinate position of women *vis-à-vis* men. The family is also viewed as the basic unit of society, resulting in strict sanctions against divorce and women suffer both economically and socially if they choose to divorce abusive partners.

In the United States, Abraham (2000) showed how issues of ethnicity, race, class, gender and citizenship were implicated in women's experiences of abuse. She reported that women faced a number of difficulties associated with the negotiation of cultural norms (prescribing gender stereotypical behaviour). Cultural norms prescribe that South Asian women of a certain age should be married and remain married whatever the circumstances. These proscriptions impact upon how women negotiate their lives with abusive partners. Women in Abraham's study also did not receive proper assistance from social institutions and some were reluctant to seek such assistance as a result of fears surrounding their immigrant status. These studies show how the socio-cultural context shape and impact upon women's experiences of violence.

Within the South African context, women's options for leaving an abusive partner or obtaining assistance for the abuse are also severely limited by the social context. In a number of studies women have reported a lack of adequate assistance from the police (Boonzaier, 2001; Maconachie et al., 1993) and the shelter system in the country is under-resourced. Medical institutions, by not adequately detecting abuse, also further victimise abused women. These institutional problems illustrate that violence against women is not an individual problem but that endorsements for violence are embedded within social institutions that deny women adequate support.

In societies that have experienced large-scale, prolonged, state-sponsored violence and militarisation (such as Chile under the dictatorship of Pinochet and apartheid South Africa), there is an increased tolerance for the use of violence as a means of maintaining authority and the use of violence may become normalised (McWhirter, 1999). Within South Africa, for example, women were particularly vulnerable during the authoritarian and violent system of apartheid, with black women experiencing multiple forms of oppression (based upon race, class and gender). In this context, violence against women should be analysed on multiple levels, including the power dynamics within South African society and apartheid's legacy of institutionalised violence (Vetten, 2000). In times of war, unrest and political violence, all forms of violence against women increase in incidence and problems of access to support systems may also be exacerbated.

2.4 *Chapter Summary*

This chapter has attempted to illustrate that the problem of men's violence toward intimate women partners has been studied in a multitude of ways. The problem has been understood to stem from individual pathology, interpersonal characteristics, and demographic, socio-economic and cultural factors. The review showed that these levels of analysis cannot be explored in isolation and are best understood in terms of a multitude of intersecting factors.

The research presented thus far has primarily focused on factors (at different explanatory levels) that increase men's tendency toward violence against women partners. In general, these approaches have been concerned with factors that 'cause' men's violence and women's victimisation, asking particular kinds of questions about psychological or demographic risk factors, for example. Some theorists, such as Heise (1998) and Heise and Garcia-Moreno (2002) have employed an ecological model for understanding the factors influencing woman abuse. An ecological model outlines issues, such as individual, interpersonal, community and socio-cultural markers and acknowledges the interplay between these factors. This approach is able to answer particular kinds of questions about specific factors relating to violence and victimisation. However, questions that cannot be answered by an ecological approach relate to individuals' own multiple understandings of violence and how these are influenced by gender and power. The following chapter shows how attention to the problem of woman abuse cannot be fully explored without locating it within the hegemonic system of male domination. A feminist analysis is suggested, arguing that woman abuse is a problem embedded in relations of gender and power. The following chapter argues for feminist poststructuralism as a theoretical approach. Some of the questions addressed by the approach offered in the following chapter include: How do women attach meaning to their experiences of being violated by an intimate man partner? How do men accord meaning to their own experiences of perpetrating violence against an intimate woman partner?

Chapter 3

WOMAN ABUSE: FEMINIST ANALYSES

This chapter argues for a feminist approach to understanding men's violence against intimate women partners. I show how debates within feminist theorising have shifted toward the acknowledgement of difference and multiplicity in understanding gendered subjectivity, and the implications these have for understanding woman abuse.

3.1 *Feminist Understandings of Woman Abuse*

Early feminist approaches to woman abuse argued that men's violence against women results from a system of gender inequity and male domination. Dobash and Dobash (1979) in their book entitled: "*Violence against wives: A case against patriarchy*", based their analysis of woman abuse on the problem of patriarchy and male domination. They offered a detailed historical and contextual analysis and focused on how traditional ideas about marriage, the family and gender roles support male control and domination over women. In their study, men were found to have become violent when they perceived that their wives were not performing their duties in terms of prescribed gender roles (e.g. being a 'good wife'). Within the broader patriarchal context, the family has been viewed as the basic unit of society with husbands being afforded authority over wives and children (Dobash & Dobash, 1979). Notions about the privacy of the family and the authority of men have filtered into other social institutions such as the law and religion. Dobash and Dobash (1979) proposed that a husband's use of violence toward his wife was a direct expression of his authority and power in the home and society at large. They also showed how women's subordinate position in the family and in society afforded them almost no protection from abuse by their husbands as institutional practices often supported the rights of husbands to exert control over their wives.

Radical feminist theories of violence against women recognise that intimate heterosexual relationships are not always safe for women since women are more likely to be victimised within the family (Duffy, 1995). Theorists argue that the family is not randomly violent but that this violence is usually directed at women. A critique of the ideology of the family and male authority is proposed and radical feminist theorists argue for the recognition of how and why women are oppressed within this context and why they become the likely targets of

men's violence. From this perspective, violence against women cannot be adequately theorised without acknowledging male privilege and historically and socially institutionalised relations of power.

Some radical feminist approaches focused on patriarchy as the only source of women's oppression. This approach has been criticised for silencing the experiences of many other victims of violence. A focus on gender alone does not acknowledge the intersection of multiple layers of identity, such as race, class, sexuality or ability status. If these layers are not given recognition, certain groups may not be deemed 'legitimate' victims and may be denied adequate protection from violence (Bograd, 1999). For example, if gender remains the only focus, theorists would ignore how the effects of racism systematically disadvantage black women (Richie & Kanuha, 1997) and how their experiences may be complicated by issues such as poverty, marginalisation and a lack of access to resources (Gonzales de Olarte & Gavilano Llosa, 1999; Miles-Doan, 1998). For a black woman, being a victim of woman abuse has very different consequences than it does for a white woman. Similarly, black perpetrators of violence are treated very differently to white men who have perpetrated violence toward their partners. However, if these constructs (race, class, sexuality etc.) are considered without according the adequate attention to gender and power, the danger is that we may conclude that women and men are equally violent and that their violence has similar contextual influences and the same consequences. Consequently, it becomes important to explore woman abuse as a problem embedded in relations of gender and power but influenced by other systems of domination and inequity.

As a result of the above critique, feminist theorising has shifted toward an acknowledgement of the multiple sites of power and oppression that differentially affect the lives of women by attending to the broader context wherein violence occurs. The shifts in theorising woman abuse mirrors black feminist challenges to a narrow western feminist preoccupation with patriarchy as the only form of women's oppression. As Mama (1996) noted, black feminists have called for an integration of race, religion, class, sexuality, culture and other forms of difference into the analyses of violence against women. An integrated, multi-systemic feminist perspective recognises the saliency of multiple sites of power and oppression (Bograd, 1999). It is acknowledged that structures of power such as race, class, sexual orientation and gender shape and colour the meaning of woman abuse. Research shows that women's experiences of violence are complicated by a number of intersecting forms of

oppression including culture (Abraham, 2000; Haj-Yahia, 2000b; Lui, 1999; Perilla, Bakeman & Norris, 1994; Zaman, 1999), race (Dawes et al., 2004; Mama, 1996; Mathews et al., 2004; Richie & Kanuha, 1997), class (Gonzales de Olarte & Gavilano Llosa, 1999; McCloskey, 1996; Miles-Doan, 1998), sexuality (Shefer et al., 2000; Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 1993) and other forms of difference. The socio-cultural context provides the lenses through which the problem of woman abuse should be analysed.

Consistent with the shift away from a focus on patriarchy alone, other debates in feminist scholarship have led to the recognition that the category of a unified 'woman' around which feminist mobilisation took place only, included a specific group of women (white, middle-class, heterosexual, etc.). Women who did not fall into this group were marginalised within feminist discourses. Bhavnani (1993) argued that women have different interests based upon their social and cultural locations. Her depiction of the "different interests" of women, overcomes essentialist notions that women (black or white) are inherently different, biologically or socially. Women's different interests are based upon women's social positions rather than on their "essential nature" as black or white women. Bhavnani (1993) illustrated how these differing interests are epitomised in the relationship between white middle-class women and their use of domestic workers, a situation also common to South Africa. The experiences of these women are fundamentally different and power relations based upon race, class, economic privilege and geographical location become central. Black and other critical feminists redefined assumptions about 'womanhood' and 'femininity' to include women who have been marginalised both within feminist theory and practice (Bhavnani, 1993). These feminist debates have led to increased acknowledgement of the differences amongst women as a group.

Apartheid and the separate social positioning of black and white women influenced debates about difference in South Africa. Feminist debates have, amongst other issues, questioned whether black women could be adequately represented or 'spoken for' by white women. In South Africa, debates about power relations amongst black and white women peaked at landmark gender conferences held between 1991 and 1992 (Serote, 1992). In her commentary on the *Women and Gender Conference* held at the University of Natal in 1991, Lewis (1992) noted that the conference did not provide a forum for all women to actively explore and debate their differences and that the concerns of white academics dominated conference discussions. Black women were marginalised and not provided with a forum to discuss their

grievances. Differences between the women, based primarily on race (but also class and other forms), were silenced. Meer (1997) outlined the most important debates in *Agenda* (a South African feminist journal) and showed that the theme of race and identity became one of the most debated issues in the history of the journal. By the same token, de la Rey (1997) reviewed the theoretical shifts that occurred within South African feminism and concurred that race and identity are central issues in the consideration of diversity amongst South African women. The shifts occurring within South African feminism are in accordance with international trends and emphasise a shift toward poststructuralist developments in feminist theory. Current feminist theorising, through its attention to multiplicity, subjectivity and power, draws upon the conceptual tools provided by poststructuralism. As Gavey (1989; 1997) argued, feminism and poststructuralism share many commonalities and should not be viewed as entirely distinct.

3.1.1 Feminist Poststructuralism and Woman Abuse

A poststructuralist framework emphasises that identities are in constant flux and may be multiple and contradictory (de la Rey, 1997). There is also recognition of multiple forms of oppression, which cannot be easily separated from each other. The feminist debates in South Africa are largely based upon the differences between black and white women (Hendricks & Lewis, 1994). It is recognised that the dichotomisation of the experiences of black and white women are not useful since all people have diverse experiences depending upon their social locations. The positioning of black and white women as different may also increase the risk of essentialism, which may also have implications for power differences. Difference however, cannot be ignored and should be explored and engaged with so that power relations are illuminated. In order to recognise a multiplicity of oppressions, the differences amongst women should be acknowledged. These differences however are not assumed to derive from the true essence of black or white womanhood, for example. Flax (1990) asserted that any feminist standpoint would be partial and that the category 'woman' does not exist "except within a specific set of (already gendered) relations – to man and to many concrete and different women" (p. 56).

The understanding of gender difference, femininity and womanhood adopted in this study is in accordance with the feminist theoretical shifts charted above. A feminist poststructuralist epistemological paradigm, with its focus on subjectivity, power and language has been

deemed suitable (Gavey, 1989; Weedon, 1987). Weedon (1987) defined feminist poststructuralism as: “a mode of knowledge production which uses poststructuralist theories of language, subjectivity, social processes and institutions to understand existing power relations and to identify areas and strategies for change” (pp. 40-41). Poststructuralist thought ✓ emphasises a deconstruction of existing categories. The category "woman" is deconstructed and gender identity and subjectivity are called into question. The deconstruction of "woman" leads to the assertion that women do not possess fixed essences but that 'women' are socially constructed as a category.

Feminist poststructuralism accords attention to how language constructs meaning and reality. The assumption that language is transparent and reflects an already existing reality (Gavey, 1997) is challenged. Realities, experiences and meanings are neither fixed nor essential and are constituted through language, which also constructs subjectivity for the individual (Gavey, 1989). Language offers us various subject positions (or a range of ways of interpreting our lives) that we can take up in order to construct our realities (Weedon, 1987). What an event means to a particular individual depends on the ways of interpreting the world and the discourses available to her/him at any particular moment. For example, the ways a woman will respond to and experience abuse are linked to her access to the ways of understanding (Weedon, 1987). Those include her self-image, beliefs about masculinity and femininity and about marriage and family life. Therefore, if she endorses constructions of masculinity as inherently violent and blames the abuse on her own provocation, she will be more likely to accept the violence. Similarly, if a man supports dominant and authoritative forms of masculinity and believes in the use of violence to achieve particular ends, he will be more likely to justify his violent behaviour.

Feminist poststructuralism posits a subjectivity that is fluid, contradictory and multiple and argues for “discursively constructed subjectivities” (Henwood, Griffin & Phoenix, 1998, p. 5), located in particular social, cultural, historical and political contexts. Views of self as stable, consistent and unambiguous are rejected. Theorists have refashioned the traditional psychological understanding of identity. Mama (1995), for example, rejected the static and unitary concept of identity as too restricted and posited the notion of subjectivity that acknowledges multiplicity, contradiction and change. Weedon (1987) characterised subjectivity as “the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relation to the world” (p. 32). Feminist

poststructuralism, as Gavey (1989) argued, denies the authority of individual experience and the 'essential' female nature. It is also able to tolerate contradiction, for example, behaviours or desires inconsistent with one's self-perceptions (Gavey, 1989).

The meanings of experience are not inherent in language but are shaped by broader systems, institutions and relations of power (Parker, 1999) and language is understood to be located in discourse (Gavey, 1989). The term 'discourse' has been used to "emphasise the organised way in which meanings cohere around an assumed central position, which gives them their value and significance" (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000, p. 14). Parker (1990) argued that discourses are systems of statements that construct objects. "It is a broad concept referring to a way of constituting meaning which is specific to particular groups, cultures, and historical periods and is always changing" (Gavey, 1989, p. 464). These ways of defining discourses are largely influenced by Foucauldian thought emphasising the role of power, language and broader institutional arrangements (Parker, 1999). This view of discourse establishes a relationship between meaning, language and power. For example, the manner in which certain qualities such as passivity and aggression come to be defined as feminine or masculine, are linked to patriarchal power dynamics which accords men power, control and dominance over women. These qualities by themselves have no inherent meaning, however, the way they are defined within particular communities are linked to discursive power relations. Discourses also offer individuals particular ways of being in the world or subject positions to take up (Henriques, Hollway, Urwin, Venn & Walkerdine, 1984; Weedon, 1987). The subject positions immediately open to any individual are based upon social power relations determined by gender, race, class, age and culture (Weedon, 1987).

There is a proliferation of studies addressing feminist issues from a poststructuralist perspective, opening up new possibilities for feminist scholarship on violence against women. Studies have focussed on women's heterosexual desire and negotiation (Gavey, 1996; Shefer et al., 2000), women's aggression (Squire, 1998) and narratives of romantic love (Jackson, 2001). These areas illuminate new possibilities for theorising about woman abuse, which acknowledge multiplicity and variability in women's experiences. In addition, the value of poststructuralist theorising is that it allows us to acknowledge women's agency and resistance in abusive relationships. Gavey (1996) argued that relationship power (male dominance and female submission) is not unidirectional and static and that our theoretical endeavours should afford us a stance that allows for competing gendered discourses. As

Gavey (1996) asserted:

... if our feminist analyses only reinstate a discourse of heterosexuality as inevitably about male dominance and female submission, then we are arguably complicit in reproducing the particular traditional cultural constructions of passive female sexuality and aggressive male sexuality which so neatly script the roles for male sexual violence against women (p. 62).

The subsequent section outlines research that has opened the way for theorising of competing gendered discourses by focusing on how women within oppressive, violent relationships are able to actively resist and display varying levels of agency. The research that shows how women's narratives of violence are both personal and social (Wood, 2001) is also examined. At the personal level women construct narratives to describe their individual experiences. These experiences, however, reflect culturally and socially produced and sustained practices of femininity, masculinity, love and violence. Following that, I also outline the research that explores men's accounts of their own violence. These narratives, by and large, are personal constructions told in order to represent positive identities. As a result, men's accounts are reinforced by justifications, minimisations and denial of abuse and violence. At the social level, men's narratives are bound up with hegemonic constructions of masculinity and femininity. In the final section of this chapter I draw these two separate, but related, strands of research together. I show how the limited base of poststructuralist research on the narratives of both partners in a violent relationship limits our understanding of the problem of woman abuse.

3.2 *Women's Accounts of Violence*

Research shows that, as women respond to violence from their partners, they change and come to view themselves as survivors of abuse, rather than victims. Mills (1985), for example, explored the narratives of 10 women who had recently left their abusive partners and described how women employed a variety of strategies to manage the violence and abuse. Women's strategies included placating their husbands, resisting or defying them, or leaving temporarily. Early in their relationships, women provided justifications for staying by minimising the seriousness of the violence or by defining the husband as the victim. In a similar vein, Kirkwood (1993) showed how women changed as they dealt with violence and,

as a result, regained some power and control in their relationships – providing the impetus for action, such as leaving, gaining support, seeking resources or threatening the abuser. She showed that power in the abusive relationship is not unidirectional and shifts according to women's personal changes and changes in the relationship status. For example, when women temporarily leave their partners, they are in a better position to negotiate for change in the relationship.

Early research that questioned why women stayed with abusive partners, only considered women's immediate contexts and tended to pathologise them for remaining with the men who violate them. Hoff (1990), however, explored women's experiences of violence while taking account of broader social and cultural issues. She argued that the consideration of why women stay should account for the interaction between the meanings they attach to their experiences, the social and cultural context, women's social networks and the practical realities of their lives. She described leaving abusive partners as a process that involves various decisions and strategies. Similarly, Hydén (1999) examined the narratives of women who left abusive partners and described leaving as an extended process. She also made the distinction between psychological and physical break-up. Hydén (1999) asserted that some women psychologically distance themselves from their partners long before they physically end the relationship. Hydén (1999) also argued that in abusive relationships, resistance was always present but seldom shown openly – she described it as a 'hidden transcript'. This assertion and other research that constructs abused women as 'survivors' rather than 'victims', has huge implications for the empowerment of women *within* abusive relationships. In fact, rather than viewing women as helplessly trapped, some researchers have suggested that women 'choose' to stay (while negotiating their situational contexts). Baker (1997), for example, focused on the level of agency of women in abusive relationships. She initiated the study from the premise that a new cultural script urged women to leave abusive partners, maintain restraining orders and co-operate with the police. From the perspective of a participant observer at a shelter and through her analysis of interview and archival data, she illustrated how women employed active, reasoned strategies and resisted this dominant script. Many women in the study chose to stay in the relationship, ignored or lifted restraining orders and refused to call or co-operate with the police. Issues that mediated these decisions were fear of harassment from their partners, emotional connections to partners, children, economic dependence and a lack of institutional support or viable alternatives. Rather than pathologising women for not leaving abusive partners, Baker's

(1997) study focused on their capacities for making reasoned choices. She showed that contextual issues were an important consideration in women's decisions to leave or stay with abusive partners, as confirmed by other studies (Lempert, 1996).

Given the shifts in the ways that abused women have been conceptualised, research has started to address the question of *how*, rather than *why*, women stay in abusive relationships. In South Africa, Boonzaier (2001) investigated how women stay in abusive relationships by examining the meanings they attach to their experiences and the intersections of gender, class and culture. The study showed how women in abusive relationships utilised a variety of strategies (both personal and social-institutional) to end the violence in their lives and challenged constructions of women as passive, submissive victims of abuse. Women's strategies and meanings were filtered through the particular socio-cultural context (characterised by violence, poverty and deprivation) within which their experiences occurred. In the study, the importance of the socio-cultural context was illustrated in the forms of violence that the participants chose to accentuate. A large proportion of the women focused on the issue of economic abuse, and their concerns may have reflected aspects of the broader socio-economic environment such as the high levels of poverty, deprivation and unemployment in the study location. The options available to women were also negotiated within these structural and material constraints. Some women questioned the effectiveness of applying for a protection order to end the abuse. Their situations were complicated by economic dependence on the abuser and the financial difficulties they would encounter if their partners were sent to prison. In a similar vein, Abraham's (2000) study of South Asian immigrants in the United States highlighted the difficulties women face in negotiating cultural norms that prescribe gender stereotypical behaviour. Women were sometimes reluctant to seek help from social institutions due to fears surrounding their immigrant status. However, within this context, women also employed a variety of strategies and negotiated personal, social and cultural boundaries in order to cope with the abuse meted out by their partners.

Profitt (2000) investigated how another group of survivors of abuse in the United States made connections between their experiences of violence and political activism, through examining the narratives of 11 survivors involved in collective action, as well as through interviews with educators and activists in the antiviolence movement. She examined the process of change in abused women who subsequently became involved in political activism to end violence

against women. Profitt (2000) showed how abused women underwent changes in consciousness and thus came to experience themselves differently – empowering them to fight for social change. This study is a valuable one, as it allows us to recognise that women who have experienced violence from their partners are able to institute action to change their conditions, and even develop an activist consciousness regarding violence against women. Thus, abused women seemed to shift from an individual toward a social identity, identifying with abused women as a group and working to change their conditions. Profitt (2000) also acknowledged the effects of race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality and ability on women's experiences of violence.

Research shows women construct particular gendered identities for themselves and their partners in their narratives of violence and relationship (Boonzaier, 2001). At times, women adopt hegemonic gendered constructions and at other times they resist them. Women's narratives contain culturally embedded stories of romance, love or fairytale, employed in order to make sense of their experiences. Towns and Adams (2000) utilised a form of feminist poststructuralist discourse analysis to explore the significance of discourses of romantic love in women's narratives of violent relationships. They showed how cultural constructions of romance and 'perfect love' serve the function of binding women in abusive relationships. These discourses have implications for women's constructions of femininity as passive and accepting of the abuse. It also has implications for how women construct their partners, for example rationalising the partners' violent behaviour by creating a split between the good and bad persona. Towns and Adams (2000) argued that women have to resist the socially constructed depictions of love and its related identities before they are able to leave a violent partner.

Similarly, Jackson (2001) showed how young women who discussed their experiences of abuse in heterosexual relationships appropriated the romantic narrative. This narrative provides specific solutions to a partner's violent behaviour. Women who situate themselves within this narrative have to adopt traditional romantic feminine ideals and provide love, care and tenderness in order to change the abuser. Passivity and the submission of women are inscribed in the romantic narrative. Jackson (2001) also showed how women resisted the victim status by not labelling their partners as violent or abusive or by denying that their experiences were abusive. Although denial of the victim status may be empowering for women, it may also keep the abuse invisible (Jackson, 2001). Eisikovits and Buchbinder

(1999) showed that abused women described their partners as 'out of control' and created a split between the normally good man and the violent abusive man. Constructing abusive partners in this manner allows for a coherent rationalisation of continued joint marital life but also rejects an incessant victim status.

Consistent with the above, Wood (2001) showed how women in her study conformed to the established gender narrative (male dominance and female submission) by making excuses for their partners' violence and internalising expectations that they should care for and nurture their romantic partners. Wood (2001) showed how women described their relationships as consistent with established fairytale narratives in their beliefs, for example, of their partners as Prince Charming and their assumptions that love can conquer any hardship. As a result of the violence, however, the fairytale romantic narrative was unattainable or could not be sustained. Women reinterpreted their experiences and drew on the assumptions of the "dark romance narrative" (Wood, 2001, p. 244). This narrative constructs violence as a typical feature of intimate relationships implying that women have to tolerate the 'dark side' of their partners and not abandon their relationships. This narrative is also characterised by discourses scripting standards of adult womanhood or femininity as incomplete unless partnered by a man. The study showed how women make meaning of their relationships by drawing on resources provided by the culture and how their narratives "reflect and embody culturally produced, sustained, and approved narratives of gender and romance" (Wood, 2001, p. 257).

In sum, this body of research lends credence to the argument that women negotiate and renegotiate strategies and alternatives within abusive relationships in order to cope within their immediate constraints (Baker, 1997; Lempert, 1996) and also to allow them to gain a modicum of power and control in their relationships (Kirkwood, 1993). The research also indicates that the process of dealing with the violence from their partners provides the impetus for personal change in women (Kirkwood, 1993; Mills, 1985; Profitt, 2000). Some women shift from an individual identification as 'victim' to identification as a 'survivor' and develop an activist consciousness regarding violence against women. These changes may be positive and allow women to gain some power and ultimately leave the abusive partners. The process of change for women, may also have implications for the relationship as a whole and may affect how women interact and negotiate with their partners.

In addition, the research reveals a complex intertwined relationship between gender construction, violence and romantic cultural narratives. Women appropriate discourses of romantic love, with implications for the construction of femininity and masculinity in their relationships. A similar trend is discernable in men's accounts of their relationships.

3.3 *Men's Accounts of Violence*

The poststructuralist literature on abusive men is not well developed but feminist researchers have taken an in-depth, interpretive approach to abusers' explanations and accounts of violence. Studies have explored how men talk about or account for perpetrating violence in their relationships (Cavanaugh, Dobash, Dobash & Lewis, 2001; Hearn, 1998; Ptacek, 1990; Stamp & Sabourin, 1995). Researchers found that men tend to employ excuses and justifications in order to minimise or deny their use of violence. Men frequently describe violence as a loss of control, temporary insanity and accumulated frustration. Other reasons men offer for their violence include external factors such as the behaviour of their wives, alcohol or jealousy (Stamp & Sabourin, 1995). These discourses of blame, denial and minimisation are employed at the individual and societal levels, frequently legitimising male violence against women. Although men often employ expressive tension discourses (O'Neill, 1998) and describe violence as a loss of control or accumulated frustration, they also draw on instrumental discourses and describe the use of violence as a means to exert authority and control over women (Dobash & Dobash, 1998).

In the United Kingdom, Hearn (1998) analysed how men talk about and understand their violence against women. He conducted two-part interviews with volunteers for the study recruited through the police, probation officers, men's programmes, prisons and welfare agencies. In the first interview, Hearn (1998) encouraged men to tell their stories by using open-ended questions. The second interview was structured in order to obtain biographic details, patterns of social support and agency responses. Hearn's (1998) findings concurred with those of other studies, in that, he found that men excused, denied, minimised and justified their violence. They set the context for violence by describing their own difficulties (e.g. family or social problems). Men in the study also used a variety of strategies to justify their use of violence. For example, they used textual devices such as invoking dual identities in the form of the violent and the non-violent self. Reitz (1999) similarly found that as men described their violent actions, they were more likely to depict themselves as 'out of control',

at times describing a dual identity (Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde). Hearn (1998) also found that men constructed masculine identities through the acts of violence and were able to control women through its use. The participants' in Reitz's (1999) study also described using violence in an instrumental manner – to assert dominance or preferred forms of positive identity in their relationships. In research exploring women's narratives of their relationships, the results are not dissimilar. Women also invoke dual identities of their partners (Boonzaier, 2001; Jackson, 2001; Towns & Adams, 2000), which serve a similar function, namely, to portray the man as not completely violent. For women it justifies remaining in abusive relationships and for men it is a form of excusing or denying violent behaviour.

Researchers exploring batterer's experiences have also accorded attention to the language men use to describe their violence. Adams, Towns and Gavey (1995) showed how abusive men employed a variety of rhetorical devices, underpinned by discourses of male dominance and entitlement, to discuss their own violence. Eisikovits and Buchbinder (1997) explored the metaphors batterers use in order to understand their intrapersonal and interpersonal realities. Their analysis showed that men employed three types of metaphors. The use of war metaphors implied that men constructed marital life as a war zone in which they needed to use violence as a means of defence. Men also employed metaphors of the self (inner space) as dangerous, describing the violence as uncontrollable and explosive. Finally, metaphors of de-escalation and balancing were employed in order to reconstruct the events and bring about order. Eisikovits and Buchbinder (1997) argued that metaphors are not just figures of speech but allow for powerful insights into the ways that abusive men perceive reality.

Wood (2004) conducted a study with 22 incarcerated men who self-identified as perpetrators of woman abuse. These men justified their violence by arguing that their partners disrespected their authority as men, that they had the right to discipline their partners, that the women provoked them and that their partners accepted their abuse. The men also dissociated or disconnected from identifying as 'an abuser' by arguing that they were not 'really' abusive and that their violence resulted from external causes (e.g. alcohol, drugs, or medical problems). Some men in Wood's (2004) study showed remorse for their actions by admitting to violence and acknowledging its wrongfulness. She showed that two dominant but contradictory narratives of masculinity were interwoven into men's accounts of justification, dissociation and remorse. The first of these narratives involved the patriarchal or traditional script of male dominance and entitlement. Beliefs supporting this narrative included ideas

that men should dominate interpersonal relationships, that women should be subservient to and appease their partners, and that violence is a normal part of manhood. Wood (2004) also showed that men's violence sometimes resulted from their fears that they did not measure up to the patriarchal or expected standard of manhood. The second narrative prevalent in men's accounts was that men should protect and safeguard women. Many men held both views of manhood (dominant and protective) and the tension between these was not necessarily resolved.

Anderson and Umberson (2001) examined the construction of gender in men's accounts of violence by interviewing 33 participants in a programme for abusive men in the US. The authors described violence as gendered practice whereby men 'accomplish' or 'do' gender through the perpetration of violence. Like Hearn (1998), they contended that men construct particular masculine identities through the practice of, and discourse about violence. The practice and discourse of violence was an attempt to reconstruct masculinities that were contested and destabilised by cultural and structural changes. Men in the study constructed gender in their accounts by suggesting that their wives were responsible for the violence, by claiming to be victims of a biased legal system, and through positioning themselves as emasculated victims of controlling or domineering partners. In a similar manner, Buchbinder and Eisikovits (2004) sketched the changes in abusive men's identities as a result of police intervention in cases of woman abuse. They showed how men experienced repeated encounters with the police as disempowering and as a betrayal by their partners. Men experienced a crisis in their identities and attempted to negotiate this by presenting a normative (positive) self despite their violent actions. Buchbinder and Eisikovits (2004) also revealed that men experienced a changing sense of self and came to view themselves as oppressed by their partners and the legal system. As a result, men perceived shifts in the power dynamics of their relationships.

In South Africa, there is a paucity of research on men who perpetrate violence in their intimate relationships. Researchers are starting to address this gap by problematising the relationship between violence and constructions of masculinity in young adult relationships (Shefer et al., 2000; Wood & Jewkes, 2001). For example, Wood and Jewkes (2001) explored how young men discussed their experiences of practising violence against female partners. They found connections between young men's talk about violence and predominant forms of masculinity available in a particular community, and showed how cultural/social contexts set

the scene for men's violence against women. Further South African research is necessary in order to explore how battering men describe and define their experiences within particular social and cultural contexts.

The argument thus far illustrates that men may explain their violence by employing justifications, excuses and denials. In their talk and perpetration of violence, men construct or 'do' gender and draw on culturally specific forms of masculinity in order to assert a preferred gender identity, in response to a perceived threat to their masculine identities. In a similar vein, women sometimes resist or take up hegemonic constructions of femininity and negotiate personal, social and cultural boundaries in dealing with partner violence. The research on men and women also shows that taking an in-depth, narrative approach to individuals' stories allows for a dynamic perspective aimed at accessing the actors' own meanings and understandings, enabling research participants to produce their own data. This approach offers a broader, more in-depth perspective on men and women's own understandings of their experiences of perpetration and victimisation.

3.4 *Couples' Accounts of Violence*

The review thus far shows that, although the literatures on perpetrators and victims of violence follow a similar trajectory, they seem to be developing independently. We are typically provided with one-sided accounts (mostly from victims and less often from perpetrators) and there is a dearth of in-depth research with both partners in a violent relationship. An integration of research on this issue is important in order to advance our knowledge about men's violence toward women in intimate heterosexual relationships.

Dobash et al. (1998; 2000) in their three-year evaluation of two programmes for violent men in the United Kingdom, used couple data to evaluate the effectiveness of different forms of intervention for violent men (*The Violent Men Study*). In their longitudinal study they conducted in-depth interviews with men and women immediately after a court sanction. At times two and three they contacted their 122 participants (comprising 95 couples) by using postal questionnaires. The data from women partners were used in order to validate men's reports and as additional markers of men's violence. As a result, an in-depth comparison of couples' accounts was not a primary objective of Dobash et al's (1998; 2000) study. In one form of output reporting on the study, Dobash et al. (1998) provided aggregated data to show

how men and women's accounts differed in terms of the types and frequency of the injuries and violence reported. They found incongruence between women and men's accounts in the following areas: reports of serious violence, the frequency of violence and the injuries sustained as a result of men's violence. Men typically underreported the frequency and severity of the violence. They also found that one quarter of women in the study said they had been forced to have sex, whereas only three percent of men said they had ever forced or coerced their partners. Similarly, Hearn (1998) found that men minimised their use of psychological and verbal abuse. They also failed to mention sexual abuse or violence unless they were prosecuted or convicted for sexual crimes. These findings provide initial evidence that women and men construct somewhat different accounts of violence in their relationships.

Dobash et al. (2000) reported on the qualitative data from *The Violent Men Study* and showed how women concurred with men's reports about how violence had changed the quality of the relationship. Women also concurred with men about the primary sources of conflict in their relationships. These included conflict over men's jealousy and possessiveness; women's social activities and isolation; men's expectations about domestic work; men's authority in their relationships; conflict over money, children and alcohol; and the couple's sexual relationship. These findings show that there may be similarities in the ways that women and men account for and understand men's violence.

Eisikovits and colleagues have conducted a number of studies using data from 'violent couples'. Eisikovits (1996) examined the strategies women and men (20 couples) employed to rationalise their decisions to continue staying together despite the violence (see page 48). Whether women 'accepted' or 'rejected' the violence influenced the strategies they employed. Eisikovits provided an interesting analysis of the men's behaviour in response to the women's strategies and the changes in the power structure of the relationship as a result. For example, women who rejected the violence used time as a strategy by temporarily leaving or not communicating with their spouses. In some respect, men partners became disempowered and had to beg or plead for women to return. The women also sometimes included an audience who then bore witnesses to men's embarrassment. Eisikovits and Winstok (2002) examined the structure, content and functions of couples' recollections of violent events in 24 couples. They examined memories of violence as a manifestation of individuals' choices to stay or leave. More men than women described staying in the relationship as a choice, a construction sometimes supported by women partners. Women,

more frequently reported that they were prevented from leaving, a construction supported by men partners. Both men and women reported that they stayed because they had nowhere to go. Eisikovits and Winstok (2002) found that when staying was perceived as a choice, individuals had a limited range of memories of the violence. When staying was perceived as forced, individuals had more intense memories of the violence. An important finding emerging from this study is that individual partners' memories are "constructed in a manner that makes this decision (to stay together) coherent with their everyday reality and accountable to audiences in immediate interactive contexts, such as the interview situation ..." (Eisikovits & Winstok, 2002, p. 687).

In another couple study, Hydén (1994) conducted a narrative study with 20 couples over a period of two years in Sweden. She aimed to identify the distinctive features of the act of violence in marriage and to understand how the individuals made sense of these acts. Hydén (1994) proposed a link between the act (violence) and the context (marriage) and described violence as a 'marital act'. She found that couples' narratives consisted of three parts, (1) the pre-history of the violence, (2) progressing through the violent incidents and (3) ending with the aftermath. Violence was described as cyclical in nature, consisting of these separated but repeated phases. During the pre-history, the marriage was characterised by a hierarchical structure and actors described an escalation of verbal aggression. In the second phase, women and men defined and described the occurrence of violent incidents. The researcher found that there were marked differences between women and men's descriptions of the violence. Women described the violence in terms of its consequences (such as fear and injuries), whereas men described the functions of violence (such as ending a verbal fight). The final phase (the aftermath) was characterised by dissociation or integration during which the man and woman jointly and individually constructed understandings of what happened. During the final phase the violence was either neutralised or rejected, resulting in the couple either divorcing or continuing to live together. This study provides valuable insight into the content, structure and process of violence in intimate relationships. Her proposition that partner understandings of violence are individually, relationally and culturally grounded holds promise for future research. However, Hydén's (1994) analysis did not involve an in-depth investigation of how woman abuse is constructed and understood at the dyadic level and how individual couples made meaning of their experiences.

In sum, the research showed that, although there were sometimes fundamental differences, women and men partners often attached similar meanings to the violence or they frequently concurred with their partners' constructions. Yassour Borochowitz and Eisikovits (2002), for example, showed that women and men partners often understood the connection between love and violence in a similar manner and they used similar strategies to split the two. These strategies were employed in order to justify the continuation of joint marital life.

The current research took the above issues further and explored women and men partners' narratives of violence in the South African context, attempting to contribute to an area in which the research is fairly recent. Rather than ask questions about the 'causes' of men's violence and women's victimisation (as outlined in the research in Chapter Two), this project asked questions about how women and men understood, explained and attached meaning to their experiences. These questions emerged from feminist understandings of men's violence that accord due attention to the influence of gender and power.

This chapter showed that, although there is research with 'violent couples', an in-depth analysis of women and men's understandings at the couple-level is less common. This study analysed how women and men partners' narratives were similar or different and how they negotiated about and co-constructed stories about the violence and their relationships. These research questions were examined through a narrative methodological approach, underpinned by a feminist poststructuralist tradition.

3.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a critique of mainstream research on violence and victimisation by showing that the problem of woman abuse is one embedded in relations of gender and power. By charting the shift in feminist understandings of woman abuse, it was shown that a feminist poststructuralist understanding of woman abuse offers a useful theoretical approach as it accords sufficient attention to subjectivity, multiplicity and power. The chapter also presented some of the research findings on women's own understandings of their experiences of violence from intimate partners. Following that, the research on men's accounts of their violent behaviour was outlined. Finally, I examined some of the research that focused on couples and showed how an in-depth understanding of woman abuse at the relational level

was a much-needed avenue for further exploration. The following chapter presents the methodological approach adopted in this project.

Chapter 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the research methods employed in this project. Some of the feminist critiques of traditional psychological research are summarised. Following that, the defining features of the narrative methodological approach adopted in this study are delineated.

Although the difficulties of separating discussions of methods and methodology are noted (de la Rey, 1999; Shefer, 1999), Harding's (1987) distinction is useful for thinking about feminist methodology. She distinguished between epistemology (assumptions about the foundations of knowledge), methodology (theory informing research practice) and methods (the strategies or tools for conducting research). In this study, these distinctions have been employed for pragmatic purposes, while acknowledging the extent to which they overlap.

4.1 Feminist Critiques of Traditional Psychological Science

Methodological debates surrounding feminist research often focus on what makes feminist methods, 'feminist'. Many authors agree that there is no intrinsically feminist method (Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor, & Tindall, 1994; DeVault, 1999; M. M. Gergen, 2001). Rather, how researchers approach their projects and the aims and objectives they seek to attain, make it feminist.

According to M. M. Gergen (2001), a 'feminist' approach addresses five features of the discipline of psychology that requires reform. Firstly, feminists call the view of the scientist as unbiased and uninvolved in the research process into question. Feminist researchers (as well as other critical social scientists) argue that the research relationship, as a form of interaction or relatedness, requires acknowledgement. Research involves the interaction between human beings (researchers and participants) who are differently located both socially and historically. Secondly, traditional psychological science suggests that general laws of human behaviour are accessed through experimental methods. Feminist researchers claim that experimental or laboratory conditions bear very little resemblance to ordinary life and the generalisations made are often spurious. A related critique is that, although generalisations are made, the samples upon which these studies are based are often North-

American university students. A third aspect of traditional psychological science in need of revision is the tenet that research is value-free. Feminist researchers argue that this is frequently not the case as value implications enter into almost every phase of the research project, and it therefore requires acknowledgement. The view of objectivity is a fourth aspect of traditional science challenged by feminist methodologists. The traditional approach asserts that facts or laws of human behaviour are independent of the observers and therefore truly objective. Feminist approaches to research argue that choice and interpretation are aspects of any research project. The research results then, depend upon the skills of the researcher as well as the interpretive community toward which it is geared. In addition, it is suggested that individuals' (including scientists') views of the world are always influenced by their own positions in it (Burr, 1998). A fifth concern of feminist research approaches is to argue against the assertion that 'scientific' methods and truths are superior to other forms of knowledge. A feminist approach stresses reflexivity and accords value to insights gleaned from other disciplines or knowledge forms. These five critiques of traditional psychological science, although discussed in relation to a feminist stance, are not distinctly feminist in their orientation. Other approaches, such as social constructionism and postmodernism also question these fundamental assumptions of positivism in psychology (K. J. Gergen, 2001).

4.1.1 Feminist Epistemologies

Feminist critiques challenge the epistemological foundations of traditional science. Feminist researchers argue that much psychological research is androcentric or centred on the male experience (Burr, 1998). The experiences of particular individuals namely, white, middle-class, heterosexual, educated, males have been privileged and women have been marginalized or misrepresented. As an example of psychology's androcentric bias, Kohlberg's (1966) stage theory of moral reasoning is often cited. Kohlberg (1966) devised a number of moral dilemmas to assess how people (men and women) think about moral issues. He conducted a longitudinal study to assess moral reasoning at different developmental stages. Based upon his scoring of the participants' solutions to the moral dilemmas, Kohlberg (1966) developed a six-stage theory of moral reasoning. In psychology, this theory has been presented as a universal account of moral development. His theory, however, has been subjected to much criticism. Gilligan (1987) for example argued that his longitudinal study was conducted with 84 boys but that the theory was claimed as universal. Other psychologists such as Freud developed theories that universalised human sexual development. When women's

experiences are viewed in terms of the theories developed by Kohlberg, Freud or others, they are frequently found to be deficient. In addition, the sexist bias in psychology is also reflected in the topics accorded attention in the discipline (Burr, 1998). These topics, such as motivation, achievement and leadership are frequently associated with 'the male experience'. Topics pertinent to women's lives (such as menstruation, pregnancy, child-birth or menopause) are accorded very little attention or virtually ignored in lifespan research (Burr, 1998). In general, psychology is criticised for its 'male-as-norm' bias, for ignoring or misrepresenting women and for its gendered and patriarchal operation (Griffin & Phoenix, 1994).

Given the epistemological and methodological critiques levelled at psychology, feminist psychologists proposed a variety of theories and methods to address these biases. There are, however, marked differences in the multitude of feminist critiques levelled at psychology. In general, three feminist epistemological strands have emerged in response to the positivist research and philosophical paradigm, namely, feminist empiricism, feminist standpoint theories and feminist postmodernism (Harding, 1987). In general, feminist empiricists argue that sexist biases in research are a result of the inappropriate application of the scientific method and they assert that the methods that have devalued women's experiences can be improved by being more attentive to women's experiences (Harding, 1994). Feminist empiricist researchers operate within the positivistic research paradigm and assert that if science is conducted properly, women's experiences will not be marginalized. Feminist empiricists tend to value quantitative over qualitative methods. Unger (1988, cited in M. M. Gergen, 2001) suggested that in order to gain social influence in the discipline (e.g. psychology) it was necessary to conform and gain influence by employing the accepted methods.

Feminist empiricists call attention to 'bad science' by highlighting how prestigious journals have avoided women's issues, how gender as a variable is generally ignored and how research results are interpreted to the advantage of men (M. M. Gergen, 2001). Despite the many contributions made by feminist empiricist researchers, the approach has been criticised for supporting the logic and values of traditional science, which still reflects an androcentric bias (Harding, 1994). In addition, the approach, like much of traditional psychology, focuses on the individual's internal world, not properly placed in context (M. M. Gergen, 2001).

Feminist empiricism critiques the way that science operates but not the foundations of scientific knowledge itself.

A second epistemological strand, namely feminist standpoint theory, argues for shift from masculine forms of knowledge to woman-centred science (M. M. Gergen, 2001). The approach argues that knowledge is derived from experience and, focusing on women's experiences will lead to more complete and less distorted knowledge (Harding, 1994). The aim of research (like all feminist approaches) is to address the shortcomings of the dominant scientific paradigms (developed by men and incorporating masculine ideals). From within this field, an excavation metaphor is used to guide research practice. The aim of feminist standpoint research is to uncover and proclaim what has traditionally been hidden from view (DeVault, 1999). Feminist standpoint researchers, compared to their empiricist counterparts, usually prefer more democratic research methods such as qualitative methods as they espouse a close, collaborative relationship between the researcher and the researched, and argue for women-only research (M. M. Gergen, 2001). The separatist position is constructed as the only safe space for women, as women. In line with a socialist/Marxist perspective, standpoint theorists accord the maximum attention to the material conditions of women's lives (M. M. Gergen, 2001; Harding, 1994). As a result, attention is accorded to the private sphere and the division of labour and domestic work are highlighted as important issues. The 'standpoint' from which women speak, however, forms the basis of the critique against this school of thought. The 'universal' woman's-story is purported to refer only to white, heterosexual, middle-class, educated and abled women (DeVault, 1999; M. M. Gergen, 2001). Situational and contextual differences amongst women are not acknowledged. This approach mirrors the radical and socialist/Marxist feminist concerns about unjustified universalism, separatism and materialism and is therefore open to challenge by black, lesbian and other feminists who argue against the notion of a 'universal' womanhood (Banister et al., 1994).

The third approach, variously named feminist postmodernism, feminist deconstructionism or feminist poststructuralism (Banister et al., 1994; Weedon, 1987) challenges both traditional science and existing feminist epistemologies (Harding, 1994). Postmodernism as a critical movement, stands in opposition to the modernist era and its alignment with the Enlightenment values of reason, truth and progress. Postmodernism emerged out of a critique of these values. Feminist postmodernism as a range of approaches or critiques, reflect a tension between challenging traditional science and claiming a place for women-centred

research (Banister et al., 1994). The notion of essential women's experience is called into question and theories, which claim a privileged position for such experiences are challenged. No theory, standpoint or perspective is awarded a privileged position, as each has its own biases and assumptions. All grand theories about gender or human behaviour are challenged.

In the 1980s feminist postmodernism was associated with a group of French intellectuals, such as Helene Cixous, Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva, who called attention to the significance of language in constructing gender differences (M. M. Gergen, 2001). The approach has since been taken up by many feminists (e.g. Crawford, 1995; Flax, 1990; Gavey, 1997; Weedon, 1987). Taken for granted meanings and categories are deconstructed, revealing a view of reality as unstable, temporal and constantly in flux. Feminist postmodernists, even more than their earlier counterparts, actively engage with underlying methodological issues such as gender, power, context and reflexivity.

Various authors have expressed the value of poststructuralist thought to feminist theorising and epistemology (for example Gavey, 1997 and Weedon, 1987). Flax (1990) argued that, "feminist theory more properly belongs in the terrain of postmodern philosophy" (p. 42). She contended that feminist notions of the self, knowledge and truth fundamentally challenge the assumptions of enlightenment thought, as do poststructuralism. In her opinion, the deconstruction of reason, knowledge and the self would reveal the effects of gender arrangements. Feminist critiques emerging out of the 'difference debates' (that acknowledge and theorise differences amongst women) share many commonalities and are therefore congruent with a poststructuralist approach.

The deconstruction of the category 'woman' was thought to have a potentially negative or devastating impact on feminist politics (Gavey, 1997). However, Gavey (1997) asserted that, "feminist poststructuralism maintains an emphasis on the material bases of power (for example, social, economic, and cultural arrangements) and the need for change at this level of discourse" (p. 54). From this perspective, feminist poststructuralism overcomes the reluctance of earlier feminist theories (such as liberal and radical feminism) to deal with differences among women. Both Gavey (1997) and Weedon (1987) have illustrated how adopting a poststructuralist framework might strengthen feminist theorising. Gavey (1989) argued that the goals of feminist poststructuralist scholarship "would include developing

understandings or theories that are historically, socially, and culturally specific, and that are explicitly related to changing oppressive gender relations” (p. 463).

The proliferation of studies addressing feminist issues from a poststructuralist perspective have shown how this project does not undermine feminism but results in new possibilities for feminist scholarship. The focus on topics such as women's heterosexual desire (Gavey, 1996; Hollway, 1995), women's aggression (Squire, 1998) and narratives of romance (Jackson, 2001; Towns & Adams, 2000) have illuminated new possibilities for theorising, which acknowledge multiplicity and variability in women's experiences. Feminist poststructuralism has become a field of scholarship in its own right – addressing the inequalities, biases and exclusionary assumptions based in hegemonic production of knowledge.

4.1.2 Key Tenets of Feminist Research Methodologies

Given the variety of critiques levelled at traditional psychological science, what then, constitutes feminist research? Feminist research is concerned with gender as its central focus, it asks research questions derived from women's experiences, and it incorporates reflexive research practices (Banister et al., 1994). The aim of feminist research has typically been to redress the marginalisation and suppression of women's experiences in research and theory generation. This is done by 'bringing women in' and focussing on women's experiences, which may be similar or very different to one another (DeVault, 1999). The feminist debates on difference and equality (among women and between women and men) have destabilised the notion of a unitary female experience (Shefer, 1999). Experiences are no longer based on assumptions of similarity among women. From a poststructuralist perspective, 'experience' does not have essential meaning and is expressed and understood in the language used to describe it (Weedon, 1987). Although the meanings around 'experience' or 'women's experiences' are contested, feminist research practice intrinsically engages with gender issues.

A second concern of feminist research is to acknowledge and theorise the roles of politics and power in the research process (DeVault, 1999; Griffin & Phoenix, 1994). By acknowledging power and the influence of values, and through the incorporation of reflexive research practices, feminist researchers seek to minimise harm to research participants and to level relations of power in the research process. This concern of feminist methodology arose in

response to research that typically harmed or exploited women as research participants (DeVault, 1999). The results of traditional research may have also been harmful to women as a group, for example, by positioning women as deficit in moral reasoning.

Feminist researchers recognise that politics and power infuse every level of the research process. At the preliminary stages, feminist researchers frequently choose topics that are pertinent to women's lives, such as violence, reproduction or a range of issues ignored by traditional psychological research. Research is intended to have pragmatic implications for feminist politics as well as social applicability (Shefer, 1999). The political and social change produced by feminist research may be in the form of changing theories or bringing new topics into the discipline (DeVault, 1999). Change may also come about through consciousness-raising and the data produced may lead to political action or influence policy decisions (DeVault, 1999). At the level of conducting research and negotiating access, power and politics are central. Feminist researchers have attempted to address power disparities in research relationships in various ways. Collaborative or participatory research projects attempt to involve participants at various levels of the research process. Participants are, for example, recruited as 'co-researchers' and may provide input on research procedures and practices. Power disparities between the researcher and the researched are, however, not easily resolved. The researcher is affiliated to an institution, decides on the topic to be explored, obtains funding, authors and receives acknowledgment and recognition for the research. At the level of theory generation, politics are also important. Feminist researchers acknowledge that theory is often gendered and that women have been excluded from the generation of theory in many social disciplines. Works that have gained recognition and hegemony within the academy are seldom those of women (Lutz, 1995).

Feminist psychologists question the prevailing definitions of science and promote methods based upon very different assumptions about the aims and purposes of research (Burr, 1998). Feminist methodology, rather than being defined in fixed terms, is held together by a commitment to address problems in the traditional approach to social science research (DeVault, 1999). As Banister et al. (1994) argued, continuing debate and critique is central to feminist research as it is more than a specific method being proposed. As a result, methodologists draw upon a variety of research methods and practices. Many feminist researchers do not completely discard quantitative methods and argue for the value of using an appropriate method to address diverse research questions. As Griffin and Phoenix (1994)

argued, the aim is not to replace the quantitative canon with a qualitative one. Nevertheless many feminist researchers employ qualitative methods as they are seen as more equitable and consistent with the aims of feminist methodology, which is to conduct socially, ethically and culturally responsible research. Qualitative research also allows feminist researchers the flexibility and closeness to explore potentially sensitive topics and to make emotional and human connections with those being researched (Griffin & Phoenix, 1994) for, as Banister et al. (1996) stated: “ ... what does it mean for the process and product if a researcher feels *disengaged* from the topic or process of study?” (p. 132, emphasis in original). I now turn to a discussion of qualitative research as a valuable tool for feminist research in psychology.

4.2 *Qualitative Research*

Psychology as a discipline has largely been, and to a large extent still is, dominated by quantification. In the nineteenth century psychology developed as a science that aimed to study the internal world (cognition) of individuals by replicating the methods of the natural and physical sciences (Ashworth, 2003). The basis of this body/mind dualism was derived from Cartesian thought with the premise that the locus of reason was located within the human mind (K. J. Gergen, 2001). The focus later shifted to explorations of the external behaviour manifested by individuals. This behaviour was thought to be a reflection of what was contained in the human mind. A strict adherence to experimental methods was the norm for psychological science. Traditional psychological methods, rooted in positivist (modernist) epistemology, included laboratory experiments and standardised tests. Psychology endorsed the study of individual behaviour, with minimal attention to the context in which behaviour occurred.

Traditional psychological research, which espouses quantitative research as the ideal, relies on a fixed series of steps to be followed in the research process. The researcher first selects the research topic and explores the existing literature in the field. Hypotheses are developed and variables are identified from the existing theories on the topic. The researcher develops research instruments such as standardised tests or questionnaires in order to test the hypotheses. Laboratory or controlled experiments may also be designed. The unbiased, objective researcher then collects the data, which is subsequently subjected to statistical analysis. Based upon the results obtained, the researcher rejects or accepts the hypotheses and falsifies or accepts the tested theory. The hypothetico-deductive model, involving the testing

and falsification of theories, is purported to lead to progress and to a closer approximation of the truth of the social world (Willig, 2001). These methods rely almost completely on the control of the researcher over the research 'subjects'. It is essential that a hierarchical research relationship be maintained. The researcher also has to maintain an unbiased, objective and emotionally distant stance *vis-a vis* the research participants. Qualitative methods emerged in response to a critique of this methodological approach.

Qualitative methods gained currency in psychology in the 1960s and emerged out of a 'crisis' in the social sciences. This 'crisis' was influenced by social movements in the United States such as feminism and the civil rights movement, and encapsulated a vigorous questioning of the methods upon which psychology heavily relied. The traditional paradigm of science was called into question, as the 'reality' it represented did not apply to all individuals or social groups (Banister et al., 1994). The rise in qualitative research also emerged out of a recognition that "too much is lost when material is quantified and that we need to base research on different conceptual foundations from those occupied by orthodox psychology" (Banister et al., 1994, p. 8). The methods of 'orthodox psychology', however, were so pervasive that an acceptance of qualitative methods was not automatic. Many years of debate surrounding the advantages and disadvantages of each approach took place before qualitative research gained validity as a form of scientific inquiry. Today, the two approaches are rarely contrasted, as researchers claim the legitimacy of qualitative research in its own right (Creswell, 1998).

Qualitative psychological research is not homogenous and cuts across disciplines and subject matter. Qualitative research may be considered a paradigm in its own right. There are a variety of approaches with varying theoretical and methodological emphases (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999). Qualitative researchers employ a variety of materials (such as visual, personal-experience or historical materials); methods (for example interviews, focus groups or observation) and analytical strategies (such as narrative, discourse, content or thematic analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Given this range of variation, any attempt at a comprehensive definition of qualitative research would be futile. There are however, a number of common philosophical and theoretical assumptions that underlie qualitative approaches to research in psychology.

At the philosophical level there are core ontological, epistemological, axiological, rhetorical and methodological assumptions that underpin qualitative approaches (Creswell, 1998; Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999). Reality is construed as multiple, subjective and socially constructed (ontology). With regard to the relationship between the knower and what can be known (epistemology), qualitative researchers value a close, empathic, 'insider' relationship acknowledging that objective accounts of the social world are unattainable. Axiology refers to the role of values in the research process. Qualitative researchers, like feminist methodologists, acknowledge that research is never value-free or apolitical. Influences of the researchers own biases and values are unavoidable. Language is an important element of qualitative research (rhetorical element). Rather than the technical, abstract language employed in quantitative studies, the qualitative researcher writes in literary, evocative and sometimes informal style and situates herself within the narrative. In addition, language is not perceived as reflective of an objective reality that exists outside of our constructions thereof. At the level of research practice or process (methodology) qualitative researchers employ an emergent design and use mostly inductive logic to guide the research process.

Following from the philosophical underpinnings outlined above, the common assumptions of qualitative research include: that meaning must be studied in context, that the researcher is central to the research process and that social research is value-laden and political by nature. As Denzin and Lincoln (1998) noted: "Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied and the situational constraints that shape inquiry" (p. 8). A focus on meaning necessitates attention to how individuals understand and interpret their own lived experiences. Qualitative researchers believe that the meaning of human experience is worthy of examination and that people are essentially self-determining and self-defining (de la Rey, 1999). In addition, there is acknowledgement that the meaning of human experiences can only be understood in relation to the contexts in which it occurs, that meaning is always contextually grounded (Mishler, 1986). Meaning and behaviour are shaped by particular social, cultural and historical contexts. Human behaviour cannot be understood without according attention to the framework or context in which individuals interpret their experiences. A qualitative approach therefore argues for studying people in their natural settings, rather than artificially contrived experimental settings (Terre Blanche & Kelly, 1999). Qualitative researchers are also theoretically committed to understanding the importance of language to communication and

the interpretation of human experience, and are engaged with exploring, describing and interpreting experience (Smith, 2003).

Qualitative approaches acknowledge that the researcher is central to the study. She or he is the one who decides on the topic to be explored, interacts with the research participants and constructs a narrative interpretation of the available data. Interpretation is the core of qualitative research and, as Denzin (1998) noted, qualitative research inevitably involves interpretation, as nothing speaks for itself. Qualitative interpretations are not inherent to the interview texts but are constructed by the researcher. Consequently, the researcher occupies a core position in the qualitative study. Researchers, rather than attempting to minimise their own biases and influences, are encouraged to examine their roles and their impact throughout the research process.

Qualitative research does not claim to be objective, but instead offers another way of working through the relationship between objectivity and subjectivity (Banister et al., 1994). The notion of reflexivity is introduced in order to work through this relationship. Banister et al. (1994) argued that the closest attainment of an 'objective' account is only possible through acknowledgement of the researcher's subjectivity. Reflexivity involves working with the researcher's subjectivity and continually reflecting upon how it shapes the research process (Banister et al., 1994; Steier, 1991). Behind every step of the research process, from topic selection to the choice of theoretical paradigms and research strategies, and the data collection and analytic methods to use, and finally to the interpretation and presentation of the research, stands the "gendered researcher (who) speaks from a particular class, racial, cultural, and ethnic community" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 23). Reflexive researchers acknowledge their own role in the entire research endeavour, from how they are seen by the participants, the effects of race, class, gender or other forms of difference between them and their participants, as well as their own assumptions and ideological or theoretical stances (Banister et al., 1994).

The process of reflexivity draws attention to the value-laden and political nature of the research. Issues of difference and sameness between the researcher and the research participants become acknowledged. Interpersonal issues or differences should be theorised. However, macro-political issues such as race, gender, class or other sources of difference and similarity are also fundamental to the kinds of information obtained.

Within the framework of qualitative methodology, there are a variety of designs or strategies available to the researcher. These may include grounded theory, phenomenology, case study research or narrative research. Next, I outline the narrative approach adopted in the present study.

4.3 *Narrative Research*

In general, narrative and discourse analysis emerged out of poststructuralist developments in interpretive theory (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). In psychology the study of narrative emerged in response to a general turn to language, aligned with the interpretive turn in the social sciences. The social scientific 'turn to language' questioned assumptions about whether the external world could be neutrally or accurately represented. In the 1980s a number of influential scholars argued for adopting a narrative approach to human experience. Authors, such as Gergen and Gergen (1984) and Bruner (1990) argued that narrative is an essential part of human nature and experience, and that we 'naturally' make sense of our experiences in the world through narrative. We bring order and meaning to our realities and actively construct the world through narrative (Ricoeur, 1984, cited in Murray, 2003a). As a result, narrative theory or narrative psychology is argued to be more than simply a debate over method as it also incorporates broader ontological assumptions (Murray, 2003b). Narrative theory has gained influence in psychology and has been used in various fields such as clinical psychology (through narrative therapy), health psychology (exploring narratives of illness), and personality and human development (showing how narratives are central to the construction of identities) (Murray, 2003a).

The proponents of narrative research argue that bringing order to human experience is but one function of narrative. Narrative is also a means by which individuals construct selfhood and identity. Murray (2003a) argued that the stories we tell others and ourselves create our narrative identities and that we represent our lives and identities in narrative form (Murray, 2003b). In a similar vein, Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber (1998) asserted that stories are an inner reality to an outside world that shape and construct a person's identity. Riessman (1993) argued that narrative research acknowledges human agency as is well suited to studies of identity and subjectivity. Investigators are interested in the manner in which individuals

convey their stories and how they construct themselves and others in the telling. Stories are told to reconstitute the past, interpret the present and hypothesise about the future of an individual life and identity. Narrative identity, however, not only has a personal connotation, but are constructed within dynamic personal and social contexts (Murray, 2003a).

Narratives have been described as socially constructed within a shared system of meanings (Gergen & Gergen, 1984). Approaches to narrative are thus strongly situated within the postmodern paradigm as the 'truth' value of narratives are always contested and fluid. Narratives are said to involve a process of communal interaction between individuals (Riessman, 1993) signifying the fluidity, multiplicity and contextuality of meanings. Narratives are context-bound and therefore shaped by social, political, historical and cultural forces. Narratives told depend upon the social context in which they are conveyed – who the narrators are, who the stories are told to, relationships between narrators and audiences and broader social and cultural contextual features (Murray, 2003a). As Murray (2003a) argued the traditional distinction between the psychological and the social is disrupted by a narrative approach, resulting in a multifaceted psychosocial subject. Hollway and Jefferson (2000) employed psychoanalytic theory to further develop the idea of a psychosocial subject who is discursively constructed and who consciously and unconsciously defends against anxiety.

Mishler (1986) argued that narrative analysis establishes a relationship between methods of analysis and theories of discourse and meaning. The language used to convey narratives is an important source of analysis. Riessman (1993), for example, referred to the ideational, interpersonal and textual functions of language. The ideational function focuses on the specific content of the language of the narrative in terms of the speaker's experiences. The relations between individuals are important when analysing meaning at the interpersonal level. At the textual level, one should pay attention to the structure of the narrative. Given the socio-cultural shaping of narratives, Riessman (1993) suggested that the broader context within which meanings are derived through language should also be a point of analysis.

4.3.1 Defining Narrative

There is no clear definition of narrative (Andrews, Day Sclater, Rustin, Squire & Treacher, 2000). However, some distinctive features have been suggested. Sequence has been defined as a key feature of narratives (Gergen & Gergen, 1984; Murray, 2003a, 2003b). Narrative

sequence could either be chronological, consequential or thematic. A chronological narrative outlines the order of events through time, from birth to old age, for example. Consequential sequencing involves the discussion of events via the causal relationship between them, such as the outlining of a new philosophy of life as a result of a crisis event. A thematic or topic-centred narrative is given form by a particular theme, such as violence from an intimate partner. Narratives have also been defined as having a clear beginning, middle and ending, as well as a logic or plot that holds the story together (Murray, 2003a).

Gergen and Gergen (1984) argued that narratives have typical forms or structures, and they distinguished between varieties of culturally available narrative forms. These narrative forms may be distinguished by some basic elements, such as an evaluative component (positive or negative) and directionality toward a valued endpoint (time). An example of narrative is that of the stability narrative, which describes events (a life, story, history) that remains essentially unchanged over time, and may be evaluated either positively or negatively. In two other basic narrative forms the teller conveys a picture of things becoming continually better/positive (progressive narrative) or worse/negative (regressive narrative) over time. Given that individual narratives sometimes depart from these basic forms, Gergen and Gergen (1984) included four other 'typical' narrative forms, namely the tragic, comic, 'happily-ever-after' and romantic saga narratives. In the tragedy a regressive narrative follows a progressive one and the protagonist charts a dramatic 'fall from grace'. In the comic narrative, the protagonist overcomes obstacles to emerge victorious. The 'happily-ever-after' narrative is typical of fairytales in which the progressive form is followed by a stability narrative. The romantic saga involves a series of progressive-regressive phases.

Riessman (1990) identified a variety of narrative genres, namely the story, habitual, episodic and hypothetical narratives. The story "recounts specific events so that the listener will believe they 'actually' happened" (Riessman, 1990, p. 118-119). In habitual narratives, the teller conveys a picture of the events over the course of time. Episodic narratives "are stitched together by themes rather than by time, making a general point through a series of snapshots" (Riessman, 1990, p. 119). When tellers hypothesize about how things might have been, they are conveying hypothetical narratives. Riessman (1990) suggested that individuals employ particular narrative forms for particular purposes, such as making the story believable or drawing the listener in. The participants in Riessman's (1990) study described their marriages that were troubled and ended in divorce. These marriages sometimes included problems of

violence but this was not the focus of the interviews or the study as a whole. While I found Riessman's (1990) suggestions regarding narrative form, structure and purpose useful, I was mindful of the fact that the participants in the present study spoke about morally reprehensible actions – violence by one marital partner against another (see also Hydén, 1994). The analysis, presented in Chapters Five and Six, will show that the form and manner of their telling were affected by the content of the interviews.

Approaches to narrative have been shown to be useful for exploring violence in relationships (Hydén, 1999; Jackson, 2001; Lea, 2002; Stamp & Sabourin, 1995; Wood, 2001). Jackson (2001), for example, showed how young women made meaning of their experiences of abuse from their partners by drawing on established romantic narratives. She showed how women's stories emerged out of the contexts in which they were produced and how their narratives reflected a multiplicity of sometimes contradictory subject positions for these young women. The women, for example, did not fully subscribe to positions as passive heroines within established romance narratives. They struggled with competing discourses and subject positions (e.g. empowering feminist narratives). Similarly, Wood (2001) showed how women drew on established romantic narratives as cultural resources to aid them to make sense and meaning out of their experiences of violence from their partners. Jackson (2001) also showed how a narrative methodological approach was consistent with a feminist poststructuralist understanding of gender and subjectivity as it acknowledges contradiction, ambiguity and multiplicity.

A narrative methodological approach (located within a feminist poststructuralist framework) was deemed most appropriate to address objectives of this study. The approach allowed for an examination of how women and men made sense, meaning or coherence of their relationships that had been characterised by violence. As Wood (2001) argued, narrative imposes coherence on experiences that do not make sense. In their telling, men and women attempted to relay coherent stories about their experiences of perpetration and victimisation. Moreover, a narrative approach acknowledges that narratives are not simply aimed at conveying meaning but at constructing subjectivity for the narrating individuals. Women and men therefore not only told stories about their relationships and the violence, they constructed themselves (and significant others) in those stories. This study was also concerned with the broader context that renders individual experiences meaningful. A narrative approach allowed for the examination of the social and cultural resources relating to violence, gender,

and relationships that were available to the participants. As a result, the approach allowed for an examination of how women and men positioned themselves within and resisted culturally constructed and sustained resources of gender and power.

4.4 *The Present Study*

This project was initiated as a result of my continuing interest into the phenomenon of woman abuse, as it remains a considerable social problem in South African society and poses a significant challenge to gender equity. Furthermore, the present study also commenced in order to continue along a research path I had started with a Masters dissertation. The Masters degree, completed in 2001, examined women's understandings of violence in their relationships (see Boonzaier, 2001). This study (the Masters) was initiated from a feminist perspective and I was not immediately aware of the importance of involving *both* partners in the research process. During my analysis of the data I often felt the need to hear the 'other side of the story', from the man's perspective. I realised that, by focusing on one partner alone, the information obtained about the context of the relationship and of the violence was limited. Of course, there were also personal and career-oriented motivations for undertaking the path to Doctoral study.

4.4.1 *The Research Process*

This study is typical of a qualitative project as many plans unfolded as the research progressed (see also de la Rey, 1999). Issues of sampling and measurement, unlike a quantitative study, are not always clearly defined in qualitative work. The process of acquiring a sample of heterosexual couples where violence was present was challenging and required a flexible and tentative approach. I understood that individuals would more than likely be reticent to discuss their intimate relationships, particularly when violence is present. For this reason I decided to recruit participants via social service organisations. I rationalised that obtaining interviews from both partners would be more likely if I contacted the male partner first. My reasons were threefold. Firstly, it is justifiable to assume that men would be more likely to resist discussing their perpetration of violence against women partners. By contacting men first and obtaining consent, I was overcoming one difficulty. Secondly, I was very mindful of the fact that women 'victims' often participate in research without the knowledge of their partners and that contacting the men afterwards might subject women to

further violence. Thirdly, having conducted prior research with women in abusive relationships, and being a woman myself, it made methodological sense to interview the men first. This was a fundamental means by which to establish rapport since I would not be blinded by the woman's story (in addition to my own biases which are inescapable). Given these constraints, I decided to recruit men participants from groups for perpetrators of domestic violence. The women partners were recruited after the interviews with the men. In total, 15 couples were recruited into the study.

I made contact with two organisations in the Western Cape province in South Africa who offer services for men and women, namely the Family and Marriage Society of South Africa (FAMSA) and the National Institute for the Crime Prevention and the Reintegration of Offenders (NICRO). Both organisations operate on a national level. FAMSA provides services such as marriage and relationship counselling, family and individual counselling as well as groups for victims and perpetrators of woman abuse. NICRO provides services for both victims and perpetrators of crime, including domestic violence. Due to their confidentiality policy, FAMSA could not consent to provide access to their client files. After meeting with the research coordinator and a group facilitator, I was informed that a FAMSA employee (the group facilitator) would have to introduce my study to the men in order to obtain initial consent. The facilitator subsequently called past participants, introduced the study and obtained permission for me to make further contact with them. She provided me with a contact list of nine men who had consented to being contacted. All nine men were contacted and agreed to be interviewed. At the outset of the interviews with the men, I made it clear that I was interested in talking to their partners as well. I obtained women's contact numbers and contacted them separately, however, only seven of the women partners agreed to participate in the study. The data from the interviews with the two additional men were not included in this study. Due to a number of organisational issues such as staff changes, I was unable to obtain any more participants from FAMSA and had to consider alternative options. I then approached NICRO, who had recently (2001) held pilot intervention groups for perpetrators of domestic violence. The groups had been piloted in two districts in the Western Cape province. My meeting with the research coordinator and project manager coincided with the start of the groups for 2003. Two of the three planned groups had already started and the next one was due to start in less than a month. I obtained permission to attend the first session of the upcoming group in order to recruit potential participants. I was also asked to assist the organisation in conducting a follow-up evaluation of the groups once completed. I

collaborated with the group facilitators for the upcoming group (located in Mitchell's Plain) and planned to attend the first meeting only. In the end, I attended all the group meetings and recruited five men from this group. The rest of the sample (three men) was recruited from another group held at the Mitchell's Plain office. These men were recruited during the post-test evaluation phase of the intervention. My familiarity with the setting (Mitchell's Plain) and my observations of the perpetrator group allowed me to obtain more contextual information, beyond the scope of my interviews. It also aided in my analysis of these particular cases.

Qualitative research is more concerned with contextualisation and generating meaning than with generalisation. Thus, studies of this nature usually employ relatively small sample sizes (e.g. Hydén, 1994). The participants for this study were 30 individuals (15 heterosexual couples). The interviews were negotiated and conducted separately. Given my own safety concerns, the preferred location for the interviews were either the FAMSA or NICRO offices. Some women preferred to be interviewed at home (four women) or at work (one woman), however, and these requests were honoured. All the interviews with men, save for one, were conducted at the organisations' offices. In one case, a potential participant requested that he be interviewed at home, given that he worked long hours and was unlikely to be able come to the organisations' offices. Faced with the possibility of losing a potential participant (from an already limited pool), I agreed to conduct the interview at the man's home. I did, however, take precautionary measures, such as being driven there by my partner, who waited outside in the car. All participants were reimbursed for any costs incurred as a result of the research.

4.4.2 Data Collection and The Interview Process

The data collection and the interview process was emergent, like most qualitative research. The process progressed from being tightly structured at the beginning of the interview process to becoming less structured as it progressed. At the outset, I was concerned about how to 'objectively' assess men's perpetration of violence, without relying solely on the reports of the women. In order to address these concerns, I employed the Violence Assessment Index, Injury Assessment Index and Controlling Behaviours Index developed by Dobash et al. (1998; 2000) (see Appendix A). The indices were administered after conducting the open-ended interview. They were employed for the first five interviews but later abandoned. The value of employing the indices was that I could explore issues that were not

raised in the interview but mentioned in the scales. This was useful in one particular case of a participant who failed to mention any form of violence in his in-depth interview but admitted to slapping his partner on the Violence Assessment Index. However, there were a number of disadvantages to employing this method. Firstly, the time participants could devote to the interviews was, in many cases, limited. The unstructured interviews lasted between 60 and 90 minutes and the additional scales added another 30 minutes, during which time participants were tired or became agitated. Secondly, the men interviewed seemed quite defensive about answering the questions on the scale. One participant almost refused to answer any of the questions, mentioning that it was difficult to answer them without providing the full context in which he acted. Employing the scales was therefore not consistent with the overall approach I had intended to take and the disadvantages of using the scale in this study far outweighed the advantages. As a result I decided to adopt a more unstructured approach to the interviewing process and to abandon the use of the violence scales.

During the interviews I attempted to be open to participants' own meanings of their experiences (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000) and to not only be guided by my own meaning-frame. In order to gain a holistic picture of men and women's experiences in violent, heterosexual relationships, a narrative interviewing approach was best suited. Further support for the use of open-ended interviewing techniques was provided by other studies on this issue. For example, Bollen et al. (1999) found that, in their study of violence against women, participants were traumatised by their experiences and were unable to focus on a single event. They also struggled to report fully on their experiences. A structured questionnaire or rigid interview format would therefore not have been suitable to address the research questions in this study. In addition, the problems of adopting a structured approach were also illustrated in the use of the violence scales in men's interviews (as discussed above).

The interview process entailed an unstructured, open-ended interaction between the interviewee and myself. After introducing the study and collecting some demographic information, I initiated the interviews with a broad, narrative-type question: "Please tell me

the story of your relationship”⁵. Follow up questions were geared toward the particular interview situation, but mostly included asking about concrete details such as the time, place and context in which events occurred. I also asked questions to assess participants’ perceptions of the perpetrator programmes towards the end of the interviews. These questions related to men’s experiences within the group and whether they found the groups useful. In the interviews where men were particularly reticent to talk about their relationships or the violence, I used their group experience as a means to gain rapport and establish trust (for example, “Can you tell me what brought you into the group?”)

Issues of language and meaning are particularly important for qualitative researchers and the methods literature usually provides guidelines on how researchers should frame and construct interview questions (see Silverman, 2001). Common guidelines are that one should avoid asking particular kinds of questions (such as ‘why’ questions or close-ended questions). When interviewing men about their use of violence, issues of language are particularly salient. Research in the area shows that men may fail to define particular behaviours as violent and that denials and minimisations are common (Hearn, 1998; Ptacek, 1990). A researcher interviewing men about their violence has to be mindful of such issues and be constantly reflective on the language s/he is using. During the interview process I attempted to be reflective and cautious about my own definitions and attempted to be open to participants own meanings and perspectives. Although men had either self-identified or had been identified as perpetrators of woman abuse, I was careful not to use language that reflected any pre-judgments about their situations or contexts.

All interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed. The interviews yielded over 600 pages of transcribed text. I transcribed the interviews myself in order to become intimately familiar with the texts. As Riessman (1993) noted, the process of transcription is itself an analytical task. I transcribed the interviews verbatim and included basic units of speech such as pauses

⁵ Upon reflection of my own interviewing style, I noticed that my opening questions were sometimes different for men and for women. In the interviews with women, I generally had no hesitation in asking directly about their relationships or experiences. With men, however, I was more reticent and sometimes asked about what had brought them into the programme, rather than asking them to tell the story of their relationships. These differences, although not detracting from the quality of the interviews, did reflect my own anxieties about my novice experience of interviewing men who had been identified as violent.

and emphases (see transcription conventions, Appendix B). Issues of language and representation are central to any qualitative study and, in this project I acknowledged that much is lost in the movement between different levels of representation and interpretation (Riessman, 1993). The movement between the spoken word, the transcribed text and the researcher's interpretation, sometimes preserves the accuracy of what was said but the inherent meanings and the manner in which speech was conveyed is not always apparent. Many of the participants in this study spoke a non-standard form of English - a combination of English and Afrikaans, a dialect with which I am familiar. Eight interviews were conducted exclusively in Afrikaans, two were a combination of English and Afrikaans and the rest were conducted mainly in English. All interviews were translated into English.

4.4.3 Insider/Outsider, Difference and Similarity in the Narrative Interview

There were important lines of difference between the participants and myself that may have impacted on the kinds of information I obtained in this study. Firstly, gender was an important axis of similarity (to women) and difference (to men). As a reflexive researcher I attempted to ensure that I was aware of and reflected upon my own biases and assumptions. Having conducted previous research with women in abusive relationships (Boonzaier, 2001), and having prior experience with counselling abused women, it was particularly challenging for me to bracket my own assumptions and biases about abusive men. Furthermore, gender may have been an obstacle to obtaining information from men about their use of violence as they were reporting violence to a woman, *to a woman* (Riessman, 1990). However, Scully (1994), in her interviews with convicted sexual offenders showed that gender was not a significant barrier to obtaining sensitive and personal information, instead establishing trust and rapport were vital. The rich data I obtained as well as the overall positive process and outcome of the interviews, allowed me to reach similar conclusions about the influence of gender during my interviews with men. Individual and interpersonal dynamics were also essential to establishing rapport in the interviews with both men and women. I acknowledge that, on a human level, it was easier for me to 'connect' with some participants than with others. These connections did not necessarily emerge as a result of gender similarities, as they were sometimes with men. On the whole, I attempted to be aware of the connections and disjunctures and not to be limited by my own biases.

The participants and I were different in multiple ways including age, education and to a certain degree, class. I am well educated (university degree), and somewhat economically privileged, compared to most of the participants in my research. Further, I am not living with violence from my partner or the immediate threat thereof. I also have prior knowledge and training around issues of woman abuse. Hence, my role as a researcher on woman abuse set the tone for many of the interviews, with some of the participants requesting assistance or advice of some sort. Hydén (1994), in her interviews with both partners, found that she was frequently called upon to mediate in the couples' relationships. Although there were some requests for assistance and some participants who struggled with relationship decisions within the interviews, all participants seemed clear on my role as the researcher and I was not requested to mediate in any of the relationships. In subtle ways, however, individuals did attempt to obtain information from me about the interviews with their partners (for example, "I don't know what he told you about this but ..."). In these situations, in order not to betray the confidentiality of the one partner, I usually ended up acting quite detached and aloof (which contrasted to the interviewing approach I intended to take). I am confident, however, that I did not betray the confidentiality or trust of any of my research participants.

Although issues of sameness within interview situations have been called into question (Frith, 1998; Lewin, 1995) issues of cultural similarity may have been salient within some of interviews in this study. Although distinct markers of shared cultural understandings are difficult to define, the language participants used pointed to the assumption of shared understandings (e.g. "Do you know what I mean?" or "you know"). These understandings were, at times, based upon shared knowledge about domestic violence and abuse. Men for example, in recounting their stories, often mentioned that they were not trying to 'rationalise' or 'justify' their behaviours. These concerns reflected the language of the perpetrator programmes but it also assumed a shared understanding about abusers' explanations for their behaviour.

Assumptions of cultural similarity may sometimes hinder the interview process in that many things are left unsaid. An example is drawn from one of the interviews with a man who described how his relationship started. He indicated that his partner fell pregnant before they were married. In our interview he relayed his conversation with her about the pregnancy: "What are we going to do because people are gonna start talking?" The respondent did not elaborate any further except to indicate that they then got married. It is likely that he assumed

that I knew there were cultural proscriptions against women having children out of wedlock thus, because his partner was pregnant they were compelled to get married. Further, in communities characterised by poverty and economic hardship certain aspects of 'respectability' seem to become even more salient (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000). If these aspects of 'respectability', such as getting married *before* having children are not adhered to, it may provide the opportunity for community gossip and social stigma. Of course, I knew all of these things but, had he elaborated on the issue, I might have been provided with some new insight into these social and cultural dynamics that could have aided my analysis.

At other times, shared knowledge may have been based upon racial, social or environmental similarities between the participants and myself. I am aware of, and have lived with many of the social and environmental issues many of the participants themselves had to deal with. I have lived (and my parents still live) in an area with a very high level of crime, violence, poverty, and drug and alcohol abuse. This is the same area in which more than half of the research participants' resided (Mitchell's Plain). Often, when participants spoke about difficulties related to economic issues or to their neighbourhood or community environments, I was able to empathise and understand the context of their stories due to some of my own experiences and the hardships I had been witness to.

The role of sameness or shared identity in research has also been questioned (Lewin, 1995) because identity (from a poststructuralist perspective) is not viewed as fixed and unitary. The notion of 'shared identity' would therefore rest on individual meanings and would depend on which forms of identity are salient (Lewin, 1995). For some participants, racial identities may have been salient and for others, their identities as fathers, mothers, wives or husbands may have been more important – although the interview content may have evoked common or similar salient identities, across interviews (that of 'victim' or 'perpetrator').

4.4.4 Research Ethics

Given the sensitive nature of the research, due care was taken to establish rapport and empathy and to create an environment conducive to safe disclosure. The following ethical principles guided my research: informed consent (autonomy), non-maleficence (do no harm), beneficence (benefits outweigh risks) and fair and just research practices (Robertson, 2000). Research participation was entirely voluntary and potential participants were fully informed

of the aims and process of the research. They were also informed that their decisions to participate in the study would not affect their chances of obtaining further assistance through the various organisations. Full, voluntary informed consent was obtained from each participant (see Appendix C). While negotiating informed consent, participants were forewarned about negative emotional consequences that may result from the interviews. All participants were offered assistance in the form of information or referrals if they deemed it necessary. By taking due care to contact women separately and confidentially, I attempted to ensure that they would be protected from harm. I also ensured that the location of the interviews were safe. When women expressed fear or concern, they were offered appropriate sources of assistance and were counselled about their relationship decisions.

Although not adequately explored in the literature, there are a number of ethical dilemmas that emerge as a consequence of research with two people in an intimate relationship. These issues include a conflict of interest, imbalance, taking sides, intrusion, inclusion, influence and disseminating results (Forbat & Henderson, 2003). A conflict of interest is not easily resolved as each party approaches the research endeavour with a variety of expectations. Participants thus, might have their own assumptions about the role of the researcher and therefore use the research encounter in order to convey particular stories. Imbalance refers to privileging one partner's account over another's. In this research I was aware of my own biases against abusive men and thus attempted to be aware of whether I was privileging women's accounts over men's. I also attempted not to 'take sides' and did not convey information shared by one party to the other partner. I made an effort not to intrude in the relationships by obtaining voluntary informed consent and by ensuring that participants were aware that they could withdraw from the research at any time. By obtaining separate (away from the other partner), informed consent, I attempted to ensure that participants were not subtly coerced into participation (the ethical dilemma of inclusion). Influence refers to the risk of the second interview being guided by discussions within the first interview. Maintaining an unstructured approach allowed participants to guide the levels of disclosure within the interview, thus ensuring minimal input from the interviewer. I was very mindful of not breaching confidentiality and therefore did not raise any issues mentioned by the first partner.

In research with two people in an intimate relationship, the issue of disseminating results also becomes an ethical challenge, as the researcher has to ensure that anonymity is retained⁶. Providing details about the couple or the relationship may result in anonymity being violated as the individuals might recognise themselves and their partners in the research report. By providing summarised results of the sample, I attempted to protect the identity of my research participants. During the write-up of the project I chose not to provide specific contextual details in order to conceal participants' identities. Nonetheless, I did choose to provide a copy of an interview transcript and core narrative summaries of the couples' narratives, in order to provide the reader with a validity check of my interpretations. I have attempted to eliminate any contextual details that may identify the participants from this material. However, it is likely that research participants might still recognise themselves, and by implication also their partners on the basis of this material. As a result, the sample interview transcript and core narrative summaries are only included in the examiners' and supervisor's copies of this thesis. This material will not be included in theses copies that will be lodged in any public space, such as the University library or in copies borrowed to others.

Research on sensitive topics challenges the researcher and participants on many levels. These include the emotional impact of such topics on the researcher and participants. Lee and Renzetti (1993) described sensitive topics as those that examine the private sphere and often have potential costs to the researcher and participants. Sensitive topics therefore carry an element of risk to both parties. While protecting the research participants is an obvious ethical concern, protection of the researcher is given less consideration in the practice of social research (Robertson, 2000). Researching sensitive issues can be emotionally taxing on the researcher. There were many times during the research process where I felt that I could not hear another story of abuse or violation. Some of the women I spoke to were similar to me in terms of age, race or relationship status and I often felt emotionally vulnerable as a result of the stories they told. During these times I found it helpful to talk about and discuss my research with others who were willing to listen. At other times, I felt myself being completely detached and almost 'hardened' to the stories I was hearing. During those times I was reminded of the gravity of the problem by re-listening to some of the interview tapes or by reading my transcripts or, yet another newspaper article about a man who had shot and

⁶ On ethical grounds I decided not to provide summary results to research participants as a check of validity. It is possible that participants might have recognised themselves in the research write-up and by implication they would also have recognised the words and perspectives of their partners. Confidentiality would thus have been breached.

killed his partner or wiped out his entire family. Although the research was emotionally challenging to me as a researcher, it was also very rewarding.

4.4.5 Sample Characteristics

Under Apartheid, all of the research participants would have been classified as 'coloured' (mixed race), except for one man who would have been classified as 'Indian'. All participants resided in Cape Town in the Western Cape province of South Africa. A majority of the participants lived in historically marginalised suburbs of Cape Town (also known as the Cape Flats). The Cape Flats is a stretch of land on the outskirts of the city of Cape Town. Coloured and black (also labelled as African) people were relocated to these areas as a result of Apartheid's Group Areas Act. The Cape Flats comprises a number of suburbs, which are characterised by high crime rates, poverty, social marginalisation and gang violence. To a large degree the suburbs of the Cape Flats are still segregated according to race, with coloured people, for example, mostly residing in areas such as Mitchell's Plain or Elsies River, and black or African people residing in areas such as Langa or Khayelitsha.

There were some social class differences between the participants recruited from the various organisations. The particular branch of FAMSA from which I recruited participants is located in a suburb close to the city centre and serves the greater Cape Town area. This clientele include people from a range of social backgrounds. The organisation provides their services at a nominal fee, so it is likely that they would attract clientele of particular means. In contrast, NICRO, based in Mitchell's Plain is a community service organisation. Because of the geographical location of the NICRO office, most of their clientele are economically marginalised and working-class. Most of the research participants (73%) lived in Mitchell's Plain or in similar suburbs of the Cape Flats.

At the time of the interviews, 12 couples were married and three were divorced. Four of the married couples were separated (not living together) at the time of the interviews. Two of the divorced couples were still living together. Couples were married between two and 22 years, with an average length of 12 years. The participants ranged in age from 28 to 48 years with an average age of 37 years. Twenty-four individuals were Christian of various denominations, five were Muslim and one was Hindu. Four individuals had completed their tertiary education and the same number had completed their secondary education. Twenty

participants had some secondary education, while two only had some primary school education. Six participants were unemployed and economically active and 18 were formally employed. The rest (six) were either retrenched or self-employed. Of those six individuals who were unemployed, five were male. Four men attended the men's programmes voluntarily and the rest were court-mandated to attend. All of the NICRO participants (eight men) were court-ordered to attend the perpetrator programme.

In the analysis, participants are identified through arbitrary pseudonyms. For ease of reference, I assigned a name with the same first letter to each partner in a couple (e.g. Mary and Max).

4.4.6 Data Analysis

There are no clear guidelines or conventions for qualitative analysis and many researchers employ a variety of analytic strategies in order to make sense of qualitative data. The analysis in this project was a multi-layered process.

I employed holistic-content methods (Lieblich et al., 1998) in order to analyse individual narratives. I read participants' narratives by attending to the foci of their stories, while attempting to be open to the meaning of the text. By attending to the content of the stories, I was able to explicate similarities and differences across and within cases. The analytical process involved the following 'steps', not necessary in linear order: (1) reading the transcripts several times (2) making analytical and content notes (3) re-reading transcripts in order to allow for special themes to emerge from each participant's story (4) follow each theme throughout the story and across narratives for all women and for all men. In terms of narrative form, I was guided by Gergen and Gergen's (1984) narrative typologies and Riessman's (1990) narrative genres. By following the individual's storyline or plot, I could explicate the macro-narrative forms (such as regressive or progressive). In addition, attention to the telling of particular events enabled me to extract whether participants employed various narrative genres, such as story, habitual, episodic or hypothetical micro-narratives and what the functions of these were. The outcome of this analysis is presented in Chapter Five.

Couples' narratives (Chapter Six) were analysed by employing a within-case and across-case analytical method (Ayres, Kavanaugh & Knafl, 2003). Firstly, I explored individual cases for how they understood the violence and how they spoke about their relationships. I then compared the partners' accounts with one another and developed themes and sub-themes. Through the comparison, I created a thematic profile/configuration for each couple. I also created narrative case summaries of each individual (core narratives). Finally, I compared the themes and sub-theme configurations across couples in order to identify clusters of couples with similar thematic configurations.

Furthermore, attention to language and discourse shaped my reading of participants' narratives. I was interested in the functional aspects of language and how these shaped women and men's narratives of violence. In line with a feminist poststructuralist view of discourse, I was attentive to the discourses they drew upon to describe their experiences, as well as how they took up or resisted those discourses. In particular, I was also concerned with another interpretive level, namely recognising contradictions, silences and gaps in individuals' accounts. My analysis of women and men's narratives of violence was also guided by Hollway and Jefferson's (2000) view of the 'defended psychosocial subject', in recognising that, "the crucial motivation for investment in particular discourses is the need to defend oneself against feelings of anxiety" (p. 59).

Borrowing from Riessman (1993), my analysis was aimed at creating a 'meta-story' about women and men's experiences in violent, heterosexual relationships. I intended to show what participants' narratives signified and how issues of politics and values entered into them. In line with a postmodern view, I conceded that my interpretations of these accounts were but one of a number of possible interpretations. My interpretations were based upon my particular readings, as they were located in a particular historical moment. My interpretive account of participants' narratives therefore remains open to re-interpretation by others. In addition, I recognised narrative as developing from a dynamic process of joint construction and re-interpretation between the researcher and the researched.

4.5 Evaluating Narrative Research

This project, located within an interpretive, poststructuralist epistemology took the view that reality is multiple, contextual and socially constructed. Thus, traditional evaluative criteria

such as reliability and validity were not wholly applicable. In the methodological literature these criteria are either reworked (Marshall & Rossman, 1999) or completely discarded (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Poststructuralist theorists contend that a new set of criteria, applicable to qualitative work, should be constructed (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Denzin and Lincoln (1998) suggested that these criteria stress features such as subjectivity and emotionality, which are not usually associated with traditional social research. As mentioned earlier, issues of reflexivity were central to this project and, is a criterion upon which it should be evaluated. My research decisions have been clearly explicated and justified. I have also been specific about my interactions with research participants and my own biases and assumptions (e.g. my feminist-coloured lenses). My own investments in the research endeavour, for example, obtaining a doctoral degree and answering theoretical and personal questions have also been discussed.

A narrative approach that developed out of poststructuralist theory emphasises the socially constructed nature of reality and does not purport a fixed 'truth'. According to Riessman (1993), the 'trustworthiness' rather than the 'truth' of our research should be validated. She suggested four approaches that include: persuasiveness, correspondence, coherence and pragmatic applicability. Persuasiveness depends on how reasonable or plausible the researcher's interpretations are. Interpretations are sometimes taken back to research participants in order to fulfil the correspondence criterion. The validity of the researcher's interpretations is therefore tested by 'member checks' – taking your work back to the research participants. Coherence involves 'thick' description at the local, global and thematic levels and that the interpretation relates to the overall aims, theory and method of the study. Pragmatic use refers to the extent to which the study becomes the basis for the work of others in the field. The current research intended to conform to at least two of the above criteria namely, persuasiveness and coherence. My interpretations have been validated through data triangulation. Obtaining insight into couple's stories through interviews with both partners provided additional data that could be validated. Furthermore, I was also an observer in a men's group that some of the participants had attended. These observations (two hours weekly over a period of about ten weeks) provided insightful data about these particular cases but also about abusive men in general. Through employing insights from these additional forms of data I aimed to produce a persuasive and coherent interpretive account. In the analytical account, I also used extended extracts from the interview texts so readers may assess the plausibility of my interpretations and bring their own meanings to bear on the text.

Given the paucity of research with both partners in the violent heterosexual dyad, it was also hoped that this research would have some pragmatic use for others to continue research in this area and that it would contribute to the redesign and conceptualisation of intervention programmes for victims and perpetrators of violence in intimate relationships.

In this chapter I outlined the rationale for employing a qualitative, narrative approach to the study of men and women's accounts of violence, located within a feminist research tradition. The sample for the study was recruited from intervention programmes aimed at men who perpetrated violence in their intimate relationships. Given that all participants in this study had been involved in some type of intervention for their relationships, it could be assumed that they must have reached a breaking point in their relationships. The sample was therefore highly selective and may have reflected a bias toward more 'severe' cases of woman abuse. Further, men *and* women's narratives may have been heavily influenced by men's participation in the intervention programmes. These, and other related issues are addressed in the analysis of the data presented in the following two chapters.

4.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a justification for the feminist methodology employed in this study. The particular qualitative methodology employed, namely narrative research, was also delineated. It was shown how a narrative analytical approach was suited to answering the questions posed by in this investigation. The particular context of the study, sample characteristics, data collection, analytical procedures and research ethics were also summarised. The chapter ended with a discussion of approaches to evaluating narrative research, and applied it to the current study.

Chapter 5

WOMEN AND MEN'S ACCOUNTS OF VIOLENCE

This is the first of two chapters presenting the analytical results of this study. This chapter portrays the outcome of a holistic-content analysis (Lieblich et al., 1998) of participants' narratives in order to orient the reader to both the commonalities and the differences in the accounts of women and men. Chapter Six uses this chapter as the necessary foundation in order to outline the results of an intensive analysis at the dyadic level.

This chapter involves the re-presentation of the narratives of women and men with regard to their relationships. The similarities and the differences in how women and men accounted for, described and made meaning of the violence in their relationships were explored. I also identified the narrative genres employed by individuals, such as story, habitual, episodic and hypothetical narratives (Riessman, 1990). By attending to these narrative genres and how the participants used them, I illuminated each person's investment in conveying their narratives in particular ways. In the first section of the chapter, I discuss some of the defining features of the beginning and ending of women and men's narratives. Following that, I illustrate how men and women defined and accounted for the violence in their relationships. In the subsequent section, I examine how individual's narratives were constructed through prevailing discourses of femininity and masculinity. The chapter ends with a summary of the main findings emerging from this analysis. The structure of the findings presented in this chapter emerged out of an inductive⁷ analysis of the narrative data.

5.1 *Narrative Beginnings and Endings*

All men and women's stories conformed in structure to a 'traditional' narrative (Hydén, 1994), with a beginning, progressing into discussions of the tumultuous relationship (middle), followed by endings, in which they constructed understandings of what had transpired in their relationships. Endings were also characterised by discussions about the dissolution of the partnership or explanations for continued joint life together as a couple. The structures of individual narratives were shaped, both by the process of storytelling and by the content of

⁷ It is questionable whether any analysis can be purely inductive and thus, I acknowledge that my analysis, though largely inductive, would have been influenced by existing theory and knowledge about woman abuse.

the story itself. The overall framework of the interview, namely men's violence toward women partners, provided the logic that held participants' stories together. Men's and women's stories about their relationship quickly progressed from discussions of beginnings into dialogues about the start of the violence or problems. Often, the men in this study briefly discussed meeting their partners and then went on to talk about their decisions to marry and the subsequent conflicts they experienced. Although some men discussed how they met and pursued women partners, most did not focus on the initial meeting, and if it was mentioned, it was only in passing. Their stories quickly progressed to brief discussions of courtship and marriage. Some men described these beginnings as "flourishing", "very nice" or the "perfect relationship". Although they used these positive adjectives, they did not accord much attention to discussing the positive phases or aspects of their relationship at the time. They quickly progressed into talking about the problems they were experiencing. Some women similarly evaluated their relationships and their partners in a positive light, by describing their relationships as "fine" or "rosy", or the partner as "caring" or "loving". The progression into the negative was swift, however. Furthermore, some men and women suggested that their relationships might have been troubled or uncertain from the very beginning. For example:

/.../ the first year started as a flop. (Paul)

I wasn't ready for marriage ... (Vincent)

/.../ there were signs during the time that we went out but at that stage I didn't see it. (Vera)

These men and women were attempting to make sense of their experiences and to find reasons for why their relationships might have failed or turned out to be problematic. The most common way was to suggest that the relationships had been troubled from the start. In the 'middle' of their stories, women and men provided accounts of the violence in their relationships by drawing on very similar but sometimes contrasting discourses. They also drew on cultural understandings of gender (femininity and masculinity) in their accounts of the violence, as will be shown later in this chapter. There were a number of possible endings to participants' narratives that were not necessarily agreed upon by both partners. As a result of the violence, women and men either divorced or separated and lived separately. Some divorced but continued to live together. Others remained together, but were uncertain about their future as a couple, given that the abuse was still ongoing. Finally, the strategies individuals employed to end the violence may have been effective and the couple were positive about their future together.

However, being aware of the varying definitions and types of violence did not mean that men necessarily agreed with these. Below, Glen recounted how he typically reacted after a verbal fight or disagreement with his partner.

/.../ I would leave, I would leave or maybe just, if I've got a glass in my hand just throw it against the wall or something and and you know to to voice your your anger and er, but sometimes that didn't even help you know. Some women are hard ((laugh)).

Floretta: How would she react when you did that?

Er, she she she, er she, I would say to her, she took it as er emotional abuse. (Glen)

Glen, through the interviewer's question⁸, was forced to consider how his wife may have perceived or reacted to his behaviour. In doing so, he admitted that his use of symbolic violence (throwing a glass against the wall) might have been perceived as emotional abuse. Thus, it appears that Glen was aware that the definition of emotional abuse included fear or the threat of violence. Glen's description above shows that, although men may have their own understandings of violence, they may also be aware of other's (women, the law) definitions as well, even though they did not necessarily concur with these. Glen also described the violence in terms of the function served by his behaviour, that it was employed in an instrumental manner in order to illustrate how angry he was. As shown below, another man, Wayne, drew on the distinction between his definitions and those of others by describing the consequences of a verbal disagreement.

And that that specific Saturday, I felt I want to pour my heart out /.../ And I spoke about all these type of things that actually took place, the problems [Floretta: Mmm]. And the afternoon I just sat there at home – I wasn't actually under the influence of drugs – I don't actually use drugs just alcohol ((laughs)) and I smoke a cigarette and so on. But er the afternoon they ((the police)) came to pick me up. Just just for scolding. (Wayne)

Wayne initially stated that he intended to communicate his unhappiness to his wife (to speak about things that were bothering him). Although he did not verbalise it or go into details, the

⁸ A challenging dynamic occurred in this interview. The participant did not readily admit to perpetrating any violence against his wife. Although he had attended a programme for abusive men (of his own accord), he chose to represent himself as non-violent. It was difficult to keep the interview focussed, and I experienced a great deal of discomfort as the interviewer. In the extract above, for example, Glen (in the third line) attempted to collude with me by joking about how 'hard' some women can be. Rather than responding with a laugh, I attempted to bring Glen's wife's perspective into the interview. His response (hesitation, stuttering) could suggest that he was taken aback by my question. However, there were other moments during the interview, where I was not as challenging as I could or should have been.

intended heart-to-heart either turned into an argument or an incident of verbal abuse, for which he was subsequently arrested. His statement (“... just for scolding”) implies that his definitions of abuse may have been different from those of his wife, as well as those of the legal system. For Wayne, however, his behaviour (talking about the problems) did not constitute verbal abuse and thus, should not have justified his arrest. Similarly, Max stated:

I must make it quite clear to you, I’m not the (type of person), through years lift up my hand for my wife. And um, a restraining order was not that I, because it was stated even I don’t use violence you know. It was more of intimidation and verbal abuse and you know. That type of thing. (Max)

In the above extract, Max drew upon a common-sense understanding that verbal or emotional abuse does not constitute serious violence and may not be as damaging to his partner. Later in this chapter, Max’s perspective will be contrasted with the way in which women spoke about psychological forms of violence as being more damaging and harmful than physical abuse. In his construction, Max attempted to resist the representation of himself as an abuser, by indicating that he had not used physical violence against his partner. Later in his narrative, however, Max described an incident where he ‘smacked’ his wife. The manner in which he explained his behaviour during the interview makes it apparent that he, too, attempted to maintain or present a positive identity, as did most of the men in this study. In order to maintain a positive identity, men drew on a variety of justificatory discourses in their talk about their own violence.

5.2.1.2 The Language of Justification

Men drew on varying discourses of blame and denial in order to justify and rationalise their use of violence against their partners. For some, it seemed vital to portray themselves as being essentially ‘non-violent’. Justification involves acknowledging that negative behaviour has occurred while simultaneously attempting to deny culpability for the behaviour (Bograd, 1988). The responsibility for men’s violent behaviour is usually located elsewhere (most frequently with the woman partner). Steven provided an interesting analogy of how he constructed the relationship between himself, his partner and the violence.

Okay picture this, I’m that dog laying outside your door in the morning. That’s your dog. You come in the morning out of the house you kick the dog, it just runs runs away. Next morning you kick him again, whole day you kicking the dog as the dog goes by. ((Inaudible)) suddenly you kick him again and he bites you.

And you like: "Hey what's wrong with this dog? There's something wrong with this dog." Phone the vet, they come fetch the dog. The vet is FAMSA. Okay the vet is FAMSA, the dog comes to the vet, I'm sitting here. "No your dog is fine there's nothing wrong with the dog. He can go back home now." The dog is back home. But what the vet didn't tell you is, don't kick the dog. Now the dog comes back home again you kick the dog everyday. Dog turns around and bites you again. Now if you don't know how to treat an animal, that dog's gonna bite you all the time. I dunno if I'm wrong ((slight laugh)). I dunno but that is how I feel. (Steven)

In the above extract, Steven made it clear that he did not feel responsible for his violent behaviour. He described his violence as a response to extreme provocation ('the dog being kicked'). Throughout his narrative, Steven shifted between constructing his violence as instrumental (used to achieve particular aims) or expressive (see below).

I sound like somebody that's trying to justify what I'm doing you know. It's that I'm not a violent person, I'm not. But if you push me too far then you push me off the edge and, I'm gonna come back to you with all I've got. That's me. And I just feel that if you understand me, maybe you won't persist so much. (Steven)

Steven attempted to justify his violent behaviour as a form of retaliation to being 'pushed off the edge'. This depiction constructed him as out of control or the violence as an expressive release of tension or frustration (O'Neill, 1998). Expressive or volcanic violence is a common metaphor for violent behaviour, both by men who use violence and by women who are its recipients. Men usually deny full culpability for their behaviour by outlining a female partner's nagging, verbal abuse or provocation. Effectively then, through forces beyond their control, men expressively respond to the female partner's behaviour by becoming violent. Tony and Steven, for example, both admitted that they were violent, but in their narratives they consistently suggested that their partners carried some (or most) of the responsibility for their behaviour.

I I felt that that, not unless she provoked me while I was in this rage would I really go and intentionally hit her. (Tony)

Both people have to work at it. If you really want this to work both must make it work. She knows I got a temper problem, why does she (persist). Why does she test me? You know. And um, it's good to be tested but not constantly man. And not in the in the manner that that she does it with me. Not in that way. It's called provoking. She provokes me. (Steven)

Above, Steven accused his partner of provocation, and elsewhere he characterised her as a 'nag'. Macdonald (1995) suggested that accusing women of 'nagging' or 'bitching' is a way of demeaning their communication, which results in and reinforces negative stereotypes of femininity. Hydén (1994) pointed out that a verbally aggressive interchange (constructed as an action-reaction-action cycle) between the man and the woman frequently precedes an act of physical violence. Physical violence occurs as a result of the individuals not being able to solve the verbal conflict adequately. This issue will be explored further in the following chapter, as it is closely related to the dynamics of couples' relationships.

Consistent with Steven's account above, Vincent below too drew on a volcanic metaphor to describe his violence as a 'loss of control'. He also interpreted his behaviour in psychological terms by describing emotions such as pain and regret.

Um, for us it wasn't, I'm not trying to minimise the extent of what I did but it wasn't, it was just two minutes, there and it's gone. And so much regret and so much pain afterwards, like lasting a lifetime. That half a minute or couple a seconds that you just lose it and try to retract but you lose sense of your emotions and can't control it. It becomes uncontrollable. You just have to go along with it. (Vincent)

Above, Vincent also employed a whirlwind metaphor in his description of how the violence spiralled out of control. Interestingly, as men such as Vincent and others attempted to justify or minimise the severity of their behaviour, they also emphasised that they were not doing so (e.g. 'I'm not trying to minimise the extent of what I did'). In fact, these men had been part of programmes for abusive men for varying lengths of time and were therefore familiar with the discourses surrounding woman abuse (such as, violence against women is never justified, or that abusive men usually try to minimise their behaviour). They thereby situated themselves both inside and outside of a discourse that does not tolerate violence against women, with their narratives being shaped by the language of the perpetrator or men's programmes.

Drawing on discourses of blame and denial, many men thus positioned themselves as victims of an abusive partner. It is interesting to note that, although many men constructed themselves as being 'dominated' by a controlling or 'masculinised' partner, not many constructed themselves as 'victims' of a physically abusive wife – even in cases where wives admitted to episodes of violence toward their husbands (such as throwing boiling water at

them). Although men may characterise their partners as domineering or masculinised in order to evade responsibility for their own violence, the force of traditional masculinity may nonetheless be too strong for some men to admit to being abused by women partners. Below, Vincent spoke about how his wife had changed as a result of the abuse, and even speculated about a time when his wife may become abusive toward him.

/.../ she's retaliating, she's not that submissive anymore, she doesn't take on that. So I think, in a lotta ways I'm the submissive one. She hasn't been abusing me, not violently but I can see that point where she will ((inaudible)). (Vincent)

In some respects, then, Vincent conceived of a reversal of roles between the abuser and the abused. The contextual details of Vincent's situation (unemployed and separated from his wife) may also have contributed to the way in which he constructed his partner as 'powerful' and himself as 'powerless'.

It is clear from the above, then, that the language men used to describe their behaviour allowed them to maintain and present positive selves within the context of the interviews. In accounting for their behaviour, men employed both excuses and justificatory strategies. Frequently, they suggested that their actions were 'caused' by internal psychological states beyond their control, or by their partner's negative behaviour. Thus, violence was represented as both expressive and instrumental, i.e. used to achieve particular aims.

5.2.1.3 The Language of Mitigation

Men employed a variety of rhetorical and linguistic devices to minimise the degree of their culpability for their violent actions or to normalise their situations. Men mitigated or excused responsibility for their violence by employing particular strategies and forms of language, such as describing the violence in reciprocal terms, employing the habitual narrative genre and changing the identity of the victim or perpetrator.

The men in this study commonly referred to their own violence as a 'fight' or 'argument' with their partners. Constructing the violent incident as a 'fight' suggests a "reciprocal activity with no clear distinction between attacker and victim" (Hydén, 1994, p. 104). It also does not provide an indication of who initiated the 'fight'. Similarly, an 'argument' suggests

a verbal disagreement between equals rather than verbal abuse. Frank's account below, for instance, suggests a degree of mutuality in the violent events.

Um, you know the drinking got worse, start swearing at each other, start fighting. Looking for for ((inaudible)) actually looking for quarrels and all that stuff. And she didn't trust me anymore. And then I started getting involved with friends and stuff and started drinking, having parties and all that stuff. (Frank)

The excerpt from Frank's narrative above was evident for many men in this study. Rather than focusing on specific incidents, outlining their actions and providing the context, men chose to speak in 'habitual' terms – to describe things as they 'generally' were (Riessman, 1990) rather than how they 'actually' were. Frank also stated that he and his partner were "actually looking for quarrels", "swearing at each other" and "fighting". By describing the events in this manner, he depicted the verbal abuse (swearing) and the physical abuse (fighting) as a reciprocal (dual) activity. In this manner, he attempted to deny sole responsibility for the abuse.

Below, another participant recounted an episode of severe physical violence towards his wife. The participant started his narrative by choosing words that imply a habitual activity ("I will grab her arm"), and then went on to tell, in story format, of a time when he choked his wife.

Now I'm someone I will grab her arm and some and once I choked her yes, so I choked her I am thinking I am just gonna choke you till you gone and you can't breathe anymore. No, uh uh drunk ((inaudible)). There all the stuff goes through my mind now I'm thinking I'm not fighting with my wife I'm fighting with a man now. And Jesus, so I could when she started making so ((makes gasping sounds)) so I let go and said ooh I went too far this time. (Oscar)

In the account above, Oscar mitigated responsibility for his actions by mentioning that he was intoxicated when the violent incident occurred. It is also interesting to note how he described a shift in his thought processes from, "I am just gonna choke you till you gone" to "I'm not fighting with my wife, I'm fighting with a man now". In his account above, Oscar "changed the victim" (Hydén, 1994, p. 136) when he spoke about 'fighting with a man' rather than about fighting with his wife. Once again, the term 'fighting' was employed to transfer some degree of agency onto the woman. However, in Oscar's account, his wife was almost absent except in the capacity of an object upon which he acted ("I will grab her arm", "I choked her"). He used his changing of the victim and the objectification of his wife, in some respect,

to justify his use of extreme violence against her. Another man, Ralph, can be seen to draw on a similar kind of rhetoric below. He represented a split or dual personality and drew on the strategy of changing the identity of the perpetrator.

It's just when I'm sober I'm a totally different person. I couldn't even count ten because then I'm, when I am sober I'm very strict. I'm a straightforward guy but when I was drunk that time, I didn't drink now for eight months, but when I'm drunk I was just, she can't tell me anything, I'm sitting on top of this world [Floretta: Mmm]. And then the abuse really started. I nearly killed my wife one-day, whoa. [Floretta: What happened?] I chased her with an axe, and I was intoxicated. And I I didn't even know about it, people come telling me the things that I did.[Floretta: Mmm] The last time I beat her up, not the last time now, there was a time that I beat her up and her face was so disfigured and I couldn't believe, I was crying the next day, I said: "It's not me." (Ralph)

Ralph's statement, "It's not me", and the juxtaposition of the drunken beast and the sober man, serve the function of distancing his non-violent self from the violent self who chased his wife with an axe and seriously injured her. Ralph distanced himself from his violent actions by indicating that he was unaware of what he had done and that he could not believe what he had done. The construction of a dual personality ("totally different person") and of violence as a loss of control was common in men's narratives. At times, either the man's use of alcohol or provocation by the woman partner provided the 'justification' for his loss of control.

In thus constructing the violence as a dual, reciprocal activity, some men also distinguished between their own violence as effective and potentially lethal, and their partner's violence as ineffectual (Anderson & Umberson, 2001), as the next example illustrates.

/.../ we used to fight a lot. We used to argue and fight a lot. And I think in any marriage. And the worst thing that she always used to do is to scratch me and now you know where a woman scratches a man first, is in the face. ... So everyone can see he was scratched there. But errr but before I would lift my hands, or I would hit her, I rather break this table in half ... or break the TV or break something else before lifting my hands, because I know. I slapped a guy once and he was unconscious in the hospital for a week /.../ (Rafiek)

Rafiek started his account by using the terms 'fight' and 'argue', hinting at a constant state of conflict in his relationship. He also attempted to normalise their situation by declaring that it occurs in any or most marriages ("I think in any marriage"). Rafiek constructed his partner's

violence as ineffectual, although he admitted that it resulted in negative perceptions from others or that it caused him embarrassment. He also seemed to suggest that a woman who has no other effective means to fight back would almost always cause a 'scratch' in a man's face. The juxtaposition of her violence (scratch) and his violence (slap) served the purpose of emphasising the severity and potentially lethal consequences of his actions. It is also possible that he employed this juxtaposition in order to illustrate that he was able to maintain self-control by breaking an object instead of hitting his wife – thereby maintaining a positive form of identity, as breaking an object may be perceived as more 'acceptable'.

Men's ways of accounting for their behaviour point to varying and multiple understandings and definitions of violence or abuse. Men's attributions and understandings of violence also allowed them to minimise the frequency and the types of violence they perpetrated in their relationships. On the whole, the language and strategies men employed to account for their behaviour were aimed at maintaining and presenting positive selves. Perhaps representing themselves in this manner may have been even more important for these men because of the context and framework of the research. The interviews had, after all, been negotiated within the context of men already having been identified as 'perpetrators of violence' through their contact with various agencies and programmes. These men were aware that I had obtained access to them via the intervention agencies and that I thus had to have some prior knowledge about them as 'perpetrators'. It is therefore likely that they emphasised discourses of justification and mitigation within their narratives, with the intention of presenting coherent and positive selves. The above also showed that, within the context of existing social, legal, psychological and educational discourses, men negotiated and defined their own understandings of violence.

5.2.2 *Women's Accounts of Violence*

How do women label, interpret and understand the violence or abuse in their relationships? In general, women provided lengthier stories of the violent episodes and frequently offered more details on the context in which the abuse occurred. However, this was not consistent for all women, and especially not for women who had difficulty in recalling many years of abuse. In general, women employed a variety of narrative forms, such as telling lengthy stories, outlining episodes, or describing their experiences in habitual terms.

5.2.2.1 *Defining Violence*

The women in this study employed a variety of narrative forms and defined their violent experiences in a number of different ways. In a 'typical' fashion below, Octavia signalled the start of a story with "one day" (Riessman, 1990).

He ((participant's son)) was small also one day and we came home one weekend and I can't really remember what the argument was about and um he smacked me that hard that my nose started bleeding and I don't know what happened, the whole room was full of blood, the floor. And I went to the bathroom and everybody was sitting here watching TV and they didn't see me coming out of the room and I went to the bathroom and I saw my nose. And when I came back to the room, he took off his shirt and he wiped up the floor because he thought I was going to tell my brother. But I didn't. I just didn't tell anybody and the next morning my lip, it affected my nose and my lip. (Octavia)

Octavia's story about the violence suggests that the incident of physical violence may have been preceded by verbal disagreements or arguments – "I can't really remember what the argument was about". This is consistent with Hydén's (1994) interpretation of how the physically violent act unfolds in the relationship (it is frequently preceded by a verbal fight or disagreement that cannot be adequately resolved and thus results in violence). These descriptions may also concur with men's accounts of an argument that preceded the violence and may also provide a form of mitigation for men's violent behaviour. Also, in Octavia's account above, it is interesting to note that she remarked: "I don't really know what happened". Nonetheless, she went on to describe in some detail the specifics of what had transpired. Her accounting for her husband's behaviour in this manner may be a way of minimising the severity of his actions (if it was not that severe, then she would not necessarily have remembered it in great detail). It may also be an attempt to distance herself from the events that followed. However, it could also mean that the argument was about something so trivial that it was difficult for her to remember.

Rather than simply reading transcripts for the use of particular forms of narrative, analytic strategies also involve attending to the function of particular narrative forms, particularly within the context of talk about violence. Women in this study often told habitual narratives when they had difficulty recounting the many episodes of violence that had occurred over a number of years. Vera's narrative, for example, was told largely in habitual form interspersed with episodic narratives of the violence. At one point in her narrative she

addressed the interviewer (who she may have thought was expecting a linear format) by stating: “I know I’m telling you all this things so deurmekaar ((confusing)) but that is how, you know ...”. Her statement conveyed that she may have been experiencing some difficulty discussing various abusive incidents that occurred over a ten-year period⁹. Below, another woman, Pam, described the various forms of abuse inflicted on her in her relationship. She told the narrative in habitual form.

I took out an interdict because ja, he will like physically abuse, you know. I would fight back. I won't say he never hit me like to have blue eyes and sores and stuff like that. But um as I would always fight back. But as I say I'm asthmatic I cannot fight with him. I will never win a fight with him. So ((clears throat)) I started to go and call the cops on him. And then it went on and eventually they lock him up for a weekend and then he would come out and then on another occasion I would call the cops again. He would do things like um, he would come in ... I've got two dogs and then he would take my dogs' food, the bag the new bag. And he'll throw it out by the door or he'll chuck it out like that. The whole bag. Or he would take the pot off the stove then he throw it outside. He would come in ((clears throat)) perhaps two 'o clock, one 'o clock at night and there would be perhaps a few dishes in the sink and cups and then he would come in and throw the dirty cups out by the door, break all the plates in the sink and the whole place would be full of glasses. And then or he would switch off (the electricity) and we would sit in the darkness. (Pam)

Pam's narrative highlights many pertinent issues. Firstly, she described the physical abuse, but she also spoke about 'fighting back'. Pam's narrative illustrated that she used violence in self-defence (“I would fight back”), rather than constructing the events as 'mutual combat' (as usually happened in men's accounts). However, fighting back, for Pam, was not an effective strategy due to her respiratory condition and perhaps also due to differences in physical strength. As a result, Pam then employed alternative strategies such as calling the police. Studies show that women do employ a variety of strategies to cope with violent partners (Baker, 1997; Lempert, 1996; Mills, 1985). Women also negotiate these strategies within the constraints of their particular contexts.

Pam named one type of abuse in her relationship (physical abuse), but she also described another type of abuse without explicitly naming it. She described how her partner terrorised her by throwing out the dog food, her pots and her crockery. This form of violence may be symbolic of physical violence and, as Glen illustrated earlier (see page 114), may also be

⁹ This impression is also based upon my observations and reflections on the interview process. This participant was unable to stay focused within the interview context, and she also struggled to convey a coherent narrative about her relationship.

5.2 *Accounting for Violence*

The terms ‘woman abuse’, ‘battering’, ‘domestic violence’ or ‘intimate partner violence’ is often used as if there was consent about their meanings. However, there are multiple definitions of violence or abuse in intimate relationships, and it is inevitable that the parties involved (women and men) would have varying understandings thereof. Hydén (1994) suggested that it is likely that women and men would perceive and label the violent actions differently as a result of their gender. Below, I thus show how men (as perpetrators of violence) talk about and account for their violent behaviour. Following that, I illuminate how women (as victims of violence) narrate their experiences and account for the violence in their relationships. Similarities and differences between the respective narratives of women and men are also identified.

5.2.1 *Men’s Accounts of Violence*

In many cultures, a man’s violence toward his partner is regarded as deviant and socially unacceptable. In these contexts, the language men use to describe their violent behaviour toward their spouses grants important insights into the meanings they attach to their experiences. Men (and women) offer accounts of their behaviour and those of significant others. Scott and Lyman (1968) argued that accounts are not merely explanations but differ from these in that they allow actors to explain unacceptable or deviant behaviour and thereby to normalise their situations. In other words, men and women in abusive relationships interpret their actions to make them more understandable to themselves and to others. The types of accounts men employed in this study included excuses and justifications. Bograd (1988) argued that excuses, i.e. the language used to mitigate responsibility for actions, and justifications, in which responsibility is accepted while denying the negative quality of the behaviour, serve to neutralise a man’s violent behaviour toward his partner.

5.2.1.1 *Defining Violence*

Men employed particular rhetorical strategies to mask their violent actions but also drew upon existing legal or social discourses in accounting for their violent behaviour. Their narratives suggested that they were aware of the distinctions between varying forms of violence, such as verbal, emotional and physical abuse, as Ralph illustrated below.

/.../ I started drinking heavily and smoking. I was on drugs heavily which I never been before [Floretta: Mmm]. And I just couldn't understand it. I think that's where the real abuse really started. Because now I was abusing her not just verbally but emotionally and ... then it started physically. (Ralph)

In the extract above, Ralph named and admitted to verbal, emotional and physical abuse. He only accepted some responsibility, however, and suggested that his behaviour may have been caused by alcohol or drug abuse. The participant below, Wayne, admitted to verbal abuse but redefined or seemed uneasy with the 'accepted' definition of physical abuse.

/.../ I was verbally abusive [Floretta: Mmm]. Um, I was also ((inaudible)) where I pulled her hair, where I took her head and pulled her hair but not actually ... they actually call that physical abuse although I didn't actually hit her or kick her or that type of thing. It was mostly verbally [Floretta: Mmm] verbally abuse. (Wayne)

Wayne drew on the implicit understanding that verbal abuse may be less serious than physical abuse and, in the extract above seemed reluctant to admit to physical abuse. He did, however, acknowledge that others ('they') might define hair-pulling as physical abuse. Men in this study seemed to be very aware of the various 'accepted' definitions of woman abuse or domestic violence. Their deployment of existing legal or social definitions of woman abuse may also be linked to the social construction of the problem. The naming of woman abuse or domestic violence as a problem is intricately linked to socio-cultural mechanisms that construct it as a significant social problem (Stark & Flitcraft, 1996). Since the first democratic elections in South Africa in 1994 and subsequent changes in the country, the issue of the quality of South African women's lives has received substantial attention. Legislation such as the Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998 and other measures have been instituted to address the problem of violence against women. There has also been a recent increase in media attention, public awareness and social and legal resources contributing to the visibility of the problem and constructing it as an issue worthy of attention and resources. In addition, all the men in the study were part of groups for perpetrators of violence, and some had had contact with the legal system, through enforced protection orders, court appearances, or imprisonment. They were therefore likely to have been very familiar with the social, psychological, legal and educational discourses around woman abuse.

perceived as emotional or psychological abuse. Given Pam's alternative strategy (calling the police), the predominant form of violence changed from physical to psychological. Physical violence is, after all, easier to identify and therefore easier to report. Although the South African legal system protects women under the Domestic Violence Act of 1998, women may be less likely to summon the police for a problem of psychological abuse by a partner. This makes dealing with this type of abuse very difficult. Below, Wilma recounted how the predominant form of abuse in her relationship changed.

And then he would phone me to work and um, tell me if I see tomorrow morning then he would have hung himself and the child in the garage and I must – that type of thing [Floretta: Mmm]. Now I'll come home with a fear. Or, later I didn't know what I could expect when I come home [Floretta: Mmm]. He now really ... when he didn't hit me anymore so he now, so emotional, that later I felt that I could lose my mind [Floretta: Mmm]. Because he now already knew I was scared of a knife now he would get up at night and then he would go and scratch in the draw, now he walks in the dark. Now I don't know, does he have a knife, or [Floretta: Mmm] later it was so, the children also used to hide the knives /.../ (Wilma)

Throughout her narrative, Wilma consistently portrayed her husband as extremely abusive, and as showing no remorse for his actions. She positioned herself as fearful and uncertain. Wilma constructed her partner as brutally violent, threatening and intimidating. In her case, the habitual narrative form was used to portray the abuse as a general characteristic of her partner's personality. In between her stories of the violent incidents, Wilma told habitual narratives in order to support her construction of him as pathologically abusive. In the extract above, Wilma also illustrated the differences between physical and emotional abuse. The emotional abuse was of a particular form, however, in that it contained the pervasive threat of physical violence. Once violence has been used in the relationship, women perceive the future threat of physical violence to be very real.

In order to describe the violence, women also employed episodic or thematic narratives, held together by the theme of violence/abuse, rather than by time (Riessman, 1990). Like the habitual form, the episodic narrative attempts to convey an overall picture or point but does so by describing various episodes with a common theme.

I felt that this man is able to kill me. The time when he choked me ((inaudible)) I felt how dark it was getting. And the child is standing, standing and watching [Floretta: Mmm]. And another incident when he drove the car and he now wants to kill us both and all this [Floretta: Mmm]. And um ... so just, every time

just, as I said out of fear actually to do something. (Wilma)

The overall point Wilma attempted to convey in recounting the various episodes was of a brutally violent partner who inflicted life-threatening violence on her and her children, and of her helplessness and fear in the relationship, all of which rendered her helpless and resulted in her inability to obtain assistance to combat the violence.

In talking about the violence, women showed that, when they employed particular strategies to deal with the physical violence, such as calling the police or enforcing protection orders, the predominant form of abuse changed and men then either used emotional or psychological abuse in order to control them. As this form of abuse was less detectable, it was more difficult to obtain assistance. Women also revealed that physical violence was frequently accompanied by emotionally controlling and abusive behaviour. In talking about the changing forms of abuse, women drew on a key metaphor of having verbal statements a physical force (Stamp & Sabourin, 1995). Words or language are described as having a real physical energy. Women drew on this metaphor when they spoke about the ‘force’ of verbal or psychological abuse.

He didn’t hit me but that time I say then you can rather hit me, but don’t say all these bad things to me [Floretta: Mmm]. It even hurts me more. (Francis)

Even though sometimes it’s not physical, but the verbal abuse is just as painful as the physical abuse. /.../ when I speak to people he would always try and like break me down. You know, he would say you don’t say like that, you say like this. That’s the way, if I laugh too loud then he would like say I’m vulgar and stuff like that ... (Vera)

In the extracts above, Francis and Vera described the verbal abuse as more painful than physical violence. Vera also depicted her partner as trying to ‘break her down’, suggesting that his words have some kind of physical force or strength. The purpose and strength of this metaphor is that it allows women to acknowledge the harmfulness of verbal or psychological abuse. This acknowledgement is also antithetical to the common-sense understanding that verbal abuse is less damaging than physical violence (see Max’s perspective on page 115).

When women spoke about verbal or psychological abuse as a physical force, they were also alluding to the changing forms of the abuse. Often, when women involved the legal system

and men were threatened with imprisonment or other forms of legal sanction, they changed the predominant form of abuse to one that was more difficult to prove (such as verbal or emotional abuse) but which was ultimately experienced by women as being more damaging.

/.../ it actually got worse than before. He er, as I said he didn't fight with me but the things that he does is much worse than fighting. (Cynthia)

But the abuse is still going on ((clears throat)) and it's like worsened because he's so clever he knows that he cannot physically abuse me. He's now abusing me psychologically, mentally [Floretta: Mmm]. (Pam)

In the extracts above, Pam and Cynthia remarked that the psychological abuse was experienced as being more painful and damaging than other forms of violence. It is interesting to note that, although men acknowledged both psychological and physical forms of violence, they perceived the latter to be more damaging or serious. In addition, men were able to resist characterising themselves (or being characterised by others) as abusive if they 'only' committed psychological abuse but not physical abuse. Women's narratives, on the contrary, show that they perceived the various forms of abuse to be occurring along a continuum of violent behaviour (changing from physical to psychological). They also, in contrast, represented psychological forms of abuse as more serious, perhaps because the existing strategies (such as calling the police) may have been less effective and because they lived with the pervasive threat of physical violence. This finding points to the suggestion that women's understandings of the seriousness of abuse could be linked to whether available and successful resources and strategies exist to combat such violence.

5.2.2.2 The Language of Mitigation

In many ways, some women also minimised and excused men's violence against them. In their narratives they minimised the frequency and severity of men's violence and also used particular forms of language, such as constructing a dual persona for the perpetrator. Some women described men's violence in terms of 'loss of control', or by using volcanic metaphors to suggest that the man's violence was both unpredictable and uncontrollable (Eisikovits & Buchbinder, 1999), as Mary illustrated below.

And with this abusive and drinking and so on I feared that he would use the gun, just get out of control and use the gun. (Mary)

According to Eisikovits and Buchbinder (1999), it may be in women's interests to represent the violence as something beyond the abuser's control, thereby resisting the construction of him as holistically violent – and of her as the victim of such violence. Using these 'loss of control' metaphors might also place the women more firmly in the victim status, as is the case for those victims of natural disasters who cannot be accorded any kind of blame for their victim status. The 'volcanic metaphor' describes the violence as an expressive release of tension (O'Neill, 1998), which represents a loss of control on the abuser's part. Celeste recounted the unpredictability of her partner's actions in the passage below.

He would um, hit me occasionally when he got um, frustrated. Or I wouldn't even know what it was about that he was angry at me or, and until last year, until last year January this year that continued. Um, and it it wasn't on a, like a weekly basis but like a, not even once a month thing but when things were fine and we'd like keep it fine, keep it fine [Floretta: Mmm, mmm] and then all of a sudden something would happen and you don't know what. (Celeste)

In the above extract Celeste depicted her partner's violence as an unpredictable occurrence that resulted from his frustration. This frustration built up over a period and caused a violent explosion that could not have been predicted. This characterisation of violence is also consistent with Walker's (1979, 1984) depiction of the phases in the cycle of violence (the tension build-up phase, the explosive phase and the honeymoon or loving phase). Women might also be invested in the depiction of violence as unpredictable because it allows them to claim that, firstly, they did not cause the violence, and secondly, they could not have done anything to stop the man's violence. It also explains why they may have stayed with their partners.

In their explanations of violence women also constructed some duality in their partners' personalities. Francis for example, seemed particularly invested in depicting her partner as having dual personalities, as it recurred throughout her narrative. At times she described him as a good husband and father, whereas at other times he was described as an "animal" or a "monster". This allowed her to discuss his violent behaviour by attributing it to one part of his personality, while simultaneously acknowledging that she stayed with him because she loved him, or rather, because of the second part of his personality. This was also the strategy adopted by other women, as the following examples show:

I don't wanna condemn him because you know one side of him, he's a good person /.../ (Rashieda)

/.../ he's an excellent father, he's a lov- he is a lovely husband when he's got the time. You know we we we we can be great together. When we when we are in love we are good together, we can be great together. We can do such a lot together, if we could only overcome this. (Samantha)

The construction of a dual persona for the abuser allowed women to acknowledge that they might still be in love with someone who abused them. Samantha, though, seemed hesitant in the statement above to outline the 'good' side of her partner (indicated through a false start and stutter in lines one and two). Due to the condemnation surrounding woman abuse and the implications of blame being placed on the women who stay, many of the women who participated in this study seemed reluctant to admit to loving their abusive partners. The issue of the relationship between love and abuse is not accorded enough attention in the woman abuse literature, but it appears as if the construction of a dual persona for abusive men allows women to overcome the paradox of the co-existence of love and abuse in their intimate relationships (Yassour Borochowitz & Eisikovits, 2002). Constructing a dual identity for the abuser may also allow women to reject the negative associations of staying with someone who is violent toward them.

The previous point illustrated the fact that women and men employed similar metaphors in talking about the violence in their relationships. Studies have also found that women tend to minimise or justify their partners' violent behaviours (Boonzaier & de la Rey, 2003; Jackson, 2001). For example:

/.../ look his hitting hitting is not hitting, punching on one and it was only that two three times when he was seeing that girl, when he hit me like that. When he banged banged banged my ... if he, it would just be one blow, and that's it, you know. It's not a constant beating and [Floretta: Mmm, mmm] you know it was only that, when he was seeing that girl when it was the two three incidents when it was like that. But otherwise it would be one smack or it would be, or he'd throw me out of bed cause now I don't want anything to do with him and, you know. (Samantha)

In the extract from Samantha's story, she described the abuse as particularly severe when her partner was 'seeing' another woman (or 'girl'). The function of this construction is that it allowed her to claim that his actions may not have been caused by his inherently violent

nature, but rather, that he may have been influenced by the other woman to be violent toward her. Blame and responsibility for his behaviour, thus, did not rest solely with Steven. Samantha's 'blame' of the other woman highlights the importance of cultural constructions of sexual relationships and gender. In contexts of male entitlement and sexual infidelity, the have/hold discourse has been found to be prevalent (Hollway, 1995). In terms of this discourse, men, by virtue of their gender, are entitled to have multiple sexual partners and women thus have to compete to keep their men partners. This imperative was found to be particularly forceful in situations of material and economic deprivation – where a 'hold' on the man partner is equated with a hold on economic and material resources (Boonzaier, 2001).

It is also interesting that, in the extract above, Samantha minimised the extent of the 'one blow' or the 'one smack', when elsewhere in her narrative she spoke about being fearful, and described incidents of extreme violence such as '... my head being banged against the window and then being thrown out of the car ...'. Samantha's minimisation of her husband's violence makes sense, though, if one considers it within the broader context of the status of her relationship at the time of the interview. Samantha and her partner had been separated for more than one week and she had been receiving constant telephone calls and gifts from him, trying to persuade her to take him back. At the time of the interview, she seemed to be struggling to make sense of her experiences and to decide whether or not she should continue with the relationship. Her narrative and the contextual details that surround it point to the temporal nature of narratives and how they are constructed within specific social and historical contexts. Thus, an issue such as the status of the relationship at the time of the interview is likely to influence the content and structure of the individual's narrative. It might also be useful at this juncture, to argue for the value of viewing of Samantha and the other research participants as 'defended subjects' (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000). Samantha seemed invested in a particular representation of the violence and of her relationship in order to maximise the coherence in her narrative and to defend herself against her own feelings of anxiety. Realistically, how could she be considering returning to someone who perpetrated such serious acts of violence against her?

Women in this study described multiple forms of violence, including physical, verbal, sexual, economic and emotional abuse. Women's stories about the abuse showed that each 'type' of abuse cannot be explored in isolation, and that the abusive behaviour should be viewed as a

web of interrelated actions and behaviours by the abusive partner and the abused woman. Women described the abuse in greater detail than men, and outlined the varying forms of abuse to a greater extent. Women also spoke about how the forms of violence had changed over time, as a result of their own strategies, as well as through other forms of intervention. They also constructed psychological forms of violence as more damaging than physical violence to the self.

5.3 *Femininities, Masculinities and Violence*

In their narratives, women and men drew on varied discourses of femininity and masculinity. The relational construction of masculinity and femininity was evident in their accounts – in constructing their gendered selves, they were also constructing the ‘Other’. The performance of masculinity through violence is also a means by which men encouraged the performance of femininity in their partners (Anderson & Umberson, 2001). In the following section of this chapter, I show how women and men were invested in discourses of traditional femininity and masculinity, for a variety of functions.

5.3.1 *Traditional Femininity*

Femininity has traditionally been constructed as nurturing, caring and selfless. Women are seen as the providers of love and care, often putting their partners’ needs before their own. Jackson (2001) explored how young women constructed themselves and their abusive partners by drawing on cultural narratives of romance. She showed how discourses of romantic love provide specific solutions to a partner’s violent behaviour. Simply put, women provide love, care and tenderness to soften the man’s abusiveness or harshness. Below, Pam accounted for why she entered into a relationship with a man she did not love.

Maybe it was out of pity whatever I dunno [Floretta: Mmm]. Cause I’m that type of person I find it very hard to hurt people’s feelings [Floretta: Mmm]. I I can’t do that and maybe that’s where I make big mistakes. (Pam)

Pam constructed her inability to ‘hurt people’s feelings’ as an aspect of her personality. It may, however, be constructed more accurately as an aspect of her feminine personality, as the latter is associated with passivity and compliance. Connell (1987) used the term ‘emphasised

femininity' to refer to a position characterised by nurturance and selflessness. In this study, many women took up these constructions whenever they depicted themselves in relation to their partners. Vera, for example, discussed the sacrifices she endured in order to acquiesce to her partner's needs and desires.

It was terrible, I always had to please him you know. I could never think of myself, I always had to think of the peace and to keep him happy. Everything that I did I had to do for him, you know. Everything that I do, I concentrate on him. (Vera)

As some women spoke about their relationships, they often referred to adopting or resisting a mothering role in relation to their partners. The lines between being the 'wife' and the 'mother' become blurred, as both involve traditional feminine practices and emphasise nurturance and selflessness. This is illustrated by the following examples.

Like he still tells me today ja he's got nobody to look after him, I'm not here to look after him. If his mother didn't look after him as a child, that's not my responsibility today, to look after him, to make sure that he's ok, you know. (Vera)

Ummm, so as we were now going along this year, I I felt that I had taken a lot of strain and a lot of, because what I felt myself being is like his mother. I have to support, I have to: "Are you ok? Why are you not ok? Oh, I you don't know then I must like dig in there in your heart and find out for you." And, it's like lots of hand-holding and spoon-feeding and you know which is not really equality in a relationship and that is what I was moving towards. (Celeste)

Psychoanalytic theorists such as Chodorow (1994) suggest that men model their relationships with their wives on the early relationships they had with their mothers. The relationships with their wives may therefore be more conflicting and encompass a range of emotions. Women, by drawing comparisons between themselves and their mothers-in-law, suggested that their partners expected them to comply with this construction. Constructing the self as the mother may at first glance seem to suggest positions of traditional femininity; in this case, however, the self is constructed as a mother in relation to the 'other', who is a child. Both Vera and Celeste invoked images of mothers caring for their children ('look after him' and 'hand-holding and spoon-feeding'). In a sense, in positioning their partners as childlike and in need of support, they were simultaneously constructing themselves as strong characters. These representations, however, also serve the function of keeping women in abusive relationships,

as some may stay out of feelings of sympathy and fully adopt the care-taking role. This mother-child (woman-man) construction provides an interesting contrast to the traditional parent-child (man-woman) metaphor that is characteristic of 'traditional' heterosexual relationships. Francis illustrated how the care-taking role she adopted ensured that she did not leave her abusive partner.

That's one thing his mother ask me never to leave her son because he's going to be like his father one day. And I always like used to tell Frank: "Look I don't want to go away from you because I know where you going to end up. Who's going to look after you?" (Francis)

The social or popular cultural narratives embedded in women's personal narratives included those of romantic love. Their constructions, as they emerged in this study, were consistent with discourses of love and the romantic narrative. These discourses of romantic love served the purpose of binding women in abusive relationships (Towns & Adams, 2000). In recounting the beginning of their relationships, some women described their partners in endearing terms (i.e. as the perfect partner), invoking images of a 'Prince Charming' who sweeps the princess off her feet (Jackson, 2001; Wood, 2001). Adhering to these depictions of their partners allowed women to present a plausible explanation for why they had entered into relationships with these men. It also seemed to suggest that something drastic must have changed for the partner to 'suddenly' become the 'beast'. Romantic narratives construct men with dual identities – those of the Prince and the Beast (Jackson 1993, cited in Towns & Adams, 2000). In terms of these constructions, the hero behaves in characteristically masculine ways by hurting and humiliating the woman but, with her patience, support and assistance, his softer side is later revealed. As Jackson (2001) suggested, women's passivity and subordination to men are core characteristics of the romantic narrative. Some women appropriated the romantic discourse by depicting their partners with a dual subjectivity – as both good and bad; loving and hateful; giving and selfish; kind and abusive. These dichotomous constructions allowed women to acknowledge the abuse but still to convey the 'acceptability' of their situations – as individuals who choose to stay with someone who can be abusive from time to time, but who also has the potential for kindness and love. If partners are described as 'normally' good, the violence is portrayed as a departure from the norm of non-violence. Women also resist the holistic representation of their partners as 'abusers' and themselves as 'victims' (Boonzaier & de la Rey, 2003). Discourses of love and romance therefore script particular feminine roles for women and masculine roles for men.

Women also endorsed the discourse of femininity by accordingly accepting blame for their partners' behaviour and holding themselves responsible for any changes in men's behaviour. Positioning themselves in the 'mothering' role also allowed women to accept some responsibility for their partners' well-being and thus their behaviour. Constructions of emphasised femininity (caring, selfless, nurturing), which women sometimes sanctioned and men attempted to enforce, emerged when women adopted mothering roles *vis-à-vis* their partners or when women attempted to adhere to the role of a 'good wife'. Although many women, particularly those who stayed in the abusive relationships, drew upon subject positions of traditional femininity, some also resisted these constructions in various ways.

5.3.2 *Reconstructing Femininity*

Some women resisted passive femininity by employing various strategies to end the violence in their lives. These strategies included obtaining social, familial or religious support, obtaining legal assistance (through a protection order) and calling the police, or a variety of behavioural strategies such as fighting back verbally or physically. These strategies were also negotiated within existing contexts and constraints. For example, some women's strategies changed from 'passive' (such as crying) in the beginning to 'active' (such as fighting back) later in the relationship. In the extract below, Cynthia described how her 'fighting back' was both emotional and sexual. She distanced herself from her partner by refusing sexual intimacy.

And I cut myself off from him, in the bed. I give his food, no I give his food. I will wash his clothes, I do what I must do. But the line was drawn. Bed stories is out. (Cynthia)

Although she resisted by abstaining from sexual intimacy, Cynthia mentioned that she still did what was expected of her in other respects (in terms of conformity to gender roles). She conformed to the role of a 'good wife' by still giving him food, washing his clothing and performing other household duties. She resisted by restricting access to her body, however.

Psychological forms of resistance by women included maintaining a positive personal identity by constructing themselves as strong, active and determined. Some women located their strengths and resistance to traditional forms of femininity in their childhood or family

practices. Tracy, for example, attempted to make sense of why her marriage to Tony might have failed.

I think also, the mistake that Tony made, was to have married a woman like me. Coming from a family with a very strong mother. You see. He had a very strong, a very aggressive and assertive father figure that was abusive. But his mother was very yielding. But in our family here I have quite a strong mother so I grew up um in a household where assertiveness you know is part of our upbringing. And um, also where the the boys and the girls were treated the same in the home. (Tracy)

Other women took pride in their educational achievements and their occupations and used them as a source of strength.

Um, because I had um, gone to university or whatever or the fact that I am working at ((company)), or I have a job and I am progressing it's because of choices I have made and effort that I put it. (Celeste)

Women were refashioning a feminine script by resisting traditional femininity in subtle ways. This script included adopting an identity as a strong, active and empowered individual, which may ironically have resulted from women's attempts to live within an abusive situation. Theorists (Mills, 1985; Profitt, 2000) propose that women's sense of themselves shift as they respond to and deal with violence from their partners. Through this process, victims of abuse may therefore come to view themselves as survivors with particular strengths.

5.3.3 *Hegemonic Masculinity*

Hegemonic masculinity refers to a subject position characterised by the portrayal of stereotypical constructions of masculine behaviour and identity as super-ordinate to femininity and other subordinate masculinities (Connell, 1995, 2002). Most of the men in this study came from marginalized communities, and thus it is questionable whether they were able to attain the ideals of hegemonic masculinity because of economic constraints. However, the analysis shows that most men held this form of masculinity as the ideal, which they were striving to attain. Both men and women consistently drew on discourses that reflect conformity to patriarchal ideology. Tony, for example, spoke about his expectations about married life and the roles of the 'husband' and 'wife'.

.../ I I probably had a more idyllic um [Floretta: view] view of marriage and stuff like this and I kind of thought because we both Christians and whatever the case is – I'll basically take the lead and and and sort of take things in a certain direction. And and in a case of a dispute or whatever and there's no thing. If I took a certain decision, my wife would basically bear with that. (Tony)

Above, and throughout his narrative, Tony made a commentary about his definition of marriage, namely, that it should conform to the traditional ideal of the man as the head of the household. Tony expected that, because both he and his wife were Christian, they would share the same definition of marriage. Tony invoked the religious symbolism of the husband as the head of the household and the wife as the passive subordinate. He constructed the man as the 'king of his castle' and the woman as the 'submissive subject' who has to abide by his decisions (Henriques et al., 1984). Religious values and ideals clearly reinforce and sanction adherence to strict gender stereotypical roles. Female submission and male domination are inscribed in the religious construction of 'women/wives' and 'men/husbands' (Boonzaier & de la Rey, 2003).

Given such conformity to traditional masculinity, men's violence may be interpreted as a direct expression of men's authority. Earlier in this chapter, participants had spoken of violence as a loss of control or as an expressive release of tension. Violence can, however, also be instrumental, intentional and functional (Dobash & Dobash, 1998; O'Neill, 1998). Vincent illustrates this below:

That's what made it so easy and that's why I felt I could ((inaudible)), she made it too easy to exercise authority. But because of where my life was going and, my career, my personal life, I I became overstressed I think with all the situations that I ended up giving it to her. (Vincent)

In a similar vein, Samantha recognised that her partner's violence was an intentional exercise of control.

Anyway, and then it was just this hard blow through my face that I got. ... I saw stars, trust me it was so hard it was so intentional. (Samantha)

Instrumental violence was also used to achieve particular aims, such as getting the female partner to stop engaging in particular behaviours or to stop 'nagging'. As Hydén (1994) reported, physical violence on the part of the man was frequently used as a strategy to end a

verbal fight. Tony describes this below:

And then she started yanking this ((hand-brake)) and I said: "Please stop that Tracy," I said, "please." And then after a while I just didn't talk anymore. I just went down ((puts head in lap)) and I just said, "Tracy just get out of this car." She wouldn't. And all I did is I came up – without even thinking – I came up and I just lashed out. (Tony)

Stamp and Sabourin (1995) suggested that men use particular forms of language to mask or minimise the severity of their violence. This is evident above as Tony spoke about 'lashing out' at his partner, rather than saying that he punched her. The 'lashing out' was in fact severe enough to cause an injury requiring stitches above her eye. Below, Steven describes how he lost control because of his partner's 'nagging'.

You know she'll swear at me and pass funny remarks and I would just be cool and calm, don't say anything because when you start saying something then it's gonna go on and on and on. So I ignore her then. She doesn't stop, she carries on for days on end, for days, days and days. And eventually when I'm now so dik ((fed-up)) of of this nagging now then it's too late. Then I'm way over board already. (Steven)

In a sense Steven constructed his violence as both instrumental (to stop his wife from nagging) and expressive (he is over-board and cannot control the outcome). When violence is used as an expression of male authority, women become the 'appropriate' victims (Dobash & Dobash, 1998). Violence, and the way it is constructed, is also intimately linked to the appropriation of 'successful masculinity'.

5.3.3.1 Successful Masculinity

Notions of successful masculinity, particularly for marginalized men, are frequently linked to a man's ability to provide financially for his family (Connell, 2002). Below, Max seemed to take pride in the fact that he always provided for his family, even though there were financial disagreements or struggles.

/.../ there is one thing that I have to tell you is that I made sure through the years that I provide for my family, you know. (Max)

Other men who participated in the study felt that they were unable to achieve successful masculinity when they could not provide for their families. In the extract below, for instance, Vincent described feelings of helplessness, sadness and failure.

They battling and she's working awkward hours to make, to make up for the lost income. She's become very determined ((inaudible)) my wife. I'm a spectator in my kids' life. /.../ Trying to keep my life, at the same time I want to help, I'm trying to keep my family together. I've lost control over all of it [Floretta: Mmm]. So I'm not gonna fight it. I'm not gonna go there until I'm in a position to make things right for all of us. Unfortunately in today's world it's all about money. In a lotta ways it buys happiness. ((inaudible)) A lotta areas would have been better if I was working, you know. (Vincent)

Vincent may have felt that he failed by not being able to provide financially for his wife and children. Consequently, he experienced a loss of control over his life. His accomplishment of masculinity seemed to be closely related to his ability to be the 'breadwinner' and 'provider'. As a result of being unable to meet these obligations, he experienced a loss of 'confidence' and 'self-esteem', characteristics that are also associated with successful or 'hyper-masculinity' (Connell, 1995).

Just as men policed women's conformity to stereotypes of femininity through violence, some women expected men to conform to the stereotypically masculine role of 'provider'. Below, Shanaaz, who lived in abject poverty, explained the problems with her partner.

And that man never worked for me, from the time that we married he never worked for me. I had to do domestic work by the people then I had to give him, or if I couldn't find work then I had to beg for food. (Shanaaz)

Cynthia provided another example:

This man is then not working. He doesn't have work because of his drinking. He doesn't work. It's now four four years that he's not working. And I was the sole supporter. Now how upsetting isn't that, you work and the man is sitting in the shebeen ((place that sells liquor)). You come, make your food, rush to make food and all that. He gets his plate of food then he still wants to treat you like a pig. (Cynthia)

These two women expressed very strong sentiments toward their partners' failure to contribute financially to the family. In both cases, it is apparent that women's notions of masculinity are tied into men being providers or breadwinners for the family. In the above

example, Cynthia showed that she conformed to what was expected of her in terms of being a 'woman' or a 'wife' by cooking for her husband. Yet, he did not conform to her expectations of masculinity or of a husband. Women's preoccupation with men's work may also reflect their preoccupation with economic issues, which were salient in both cases above. If women experience daily life as a struggle for survival, their concerns over men's work are understandable. However, the current socio-cultural context in South Africa actually makes it difficult for many men to conform to these ideals. At almost 30%, unemployment is rife in South Africa and is a problem that continues to demand attention (Statistics South Africa, 2004). In addition, both these women lived in Mitchell's Plain (an area on the Cape Flats), which is also an area characterised by abject poverty and limited opportunities for economic and social advancement.

When gender roles are reversed or contradicted (e.g. when women become breadwinners), income and educational disparities between marital partners may set the scene for constant disagreements over financial issues.

Um, the problems was finances. And up till today I still feel, maybe her parents were right by telling me that I've got a standard eight, she got a degree, it's not gonna work. Um, she would ever so now and then she would tell me that you know I am the breadwinner in the house. And, it made me feel like I'm being somehow ripped. Everything has been ripped away from me ... (Craig)

In interpersonal relationships, the prevailing and acceptable 'gender order' is subverted when women earn salaries that are equal to or more than those of their male partners. As a result of high levels of poverty and unemployment in South African society, it is indeed possible for women sometimes to be the primary breadwinners, while men partners struggle with chronic unemployment. Salo (2003) discussed how, during apartheid, the textile industry in the Western Cape province was highly gendered and reliant on coloured women as a cheap source of labour. Coloured men therefore not only had to compete with coloured women for jobs but also compete within a racist and highly segregated society. These historical patterns have not shifted significantly in recent years, although the textile industry in the Western Cape is suffering as a result of cheap imports resulting in instability in the textile industry. The social structural issue of the reversal of gender roles has a marked effect on interpersonal, intimate relationships, where men may feel disempowered by women's increasing 'power' and thus exert their 'expected' dominance through a number of violent

and coercive practices. Salo (2003) also showed how coloured men negotiated other forms of violent masculinity in the context of gang formation and criminal activity.

5.3.3.2 Masculinity and Sexual Coercion

Sexuality is an issue closely linked to ideals of masculinity and femininity and it is a means by which men and women can adhere to and monitor conformity to hegemonic gendered standards. The quantity of sexual intimacy or contact in marital relationships is often a major form of conflict or disagreement (Abrahams et al., 2004; Dobash & Dobash, 1998). According to Riessman (1990), one of the core elements of the ideology of the companionate marriage is sexual fulfilment. Both men and women expect their partners to fulfil their sexual needs. Some of the male participants in this study did indeed mention problems related to sexual intimacy or fulfilment.

But er as I said Floretta is that (2) she must sit still and realise, she are going to lose me. Ja. Because we living, she's staying in that room I'm staying in the main bedroom. And that hurts me very very much [Floretta: Mmm]. Because you see now it's cold, where's your partner? When I (wake) up I feel here where's my partner and she's sleeping with my baby daughter. (Clive)

We don't sleep out with each other anymore, there's no, ... there's no er contact in the relationship anymore. We don't kiss each other, we don't. It's too painful for her to go there so I try and respect it. I say try because there's times when I don't understand. I allow her to go through. (Vincent)

Clive and Vincent thus cited the lack of sexual intimacy in their relationships as a problem. Their comments also showed that issues of sexual reciprocity are complicated in cases of marital violence. The attainment of sexual intimacy or fulfilment for a woman may be difficult or impossible in a relationship where the man has been violent towards her. This is further underscored by the fact that the women who participated in this study did not speak about their needs for sexual intimacy in their relationships. Rather, the context in which sexuality was discussed was in terms of sexual coercion or demands.

Rather than discussing issues related to sexual intimacy or fulfilment, the women in this study spoke about sexual coercion or violence. Kelly (1990) described sexual abuse or coercion as occurring along a continuum of controlling and violent behaviours. These range from sexually violent acts to insidious coercive practices whose aim it is to control access to

women's bodies. Essentially, women often acquiesce to unwanted sex with their partners because they fear violence or other forms of retaliation (Basile, 1999).

And also when, I mean if you say no, he wants to have sex and you say no and then he just does it anyway [Floretta: Mmm] you know. That kind of thing. [Floretta: Did it happen often?] Ja, especially when he's like drugged and stuff like that ja. And comes in late. ... And wake me up, ja. That wasn't nice. It leaves you very empty. [Floretta: Mmm] It actually leaves you with a feeling of being raped. (Vera)

Vera tentatively named the sexual violence from her husband as rape. The 'victim' role incorporates shame and humiliation, which she did indeed experience, but in this context it makes sense for Vera to speak of a 'feeling of being raped' rather than constructing the incident as actual rape. In Vera's description of the incident, constructions of male sexuality as active ("he wants to have sex") and female sexuality as passive ("you say no and then he just does it anyway") are also implicit.

In her narrative, Samantha frequently spoke about sexual coercion and her reasons for acquiescing to her partner's demands for sexual contact ('he'll punch me or he'll throw me off the bed'). As illustrated below, she spoke about how he expected sexual contact after an episode of verbal abuse, which was in line with the reports of many other women in the study as well.

Steven wants to swear at me, so ugly tonight, earlier and then tonight he wants to, I must now just forget about it. Cover it up. When he now feels it's right. But if he feels it must go on for a week, it must go on for a month then he'll ignore me, he won't speak to me. I can't ask him, nothing. I won't get any response. But now when he now feels it's just now long enough then I must just be ((snaps her fingers)), I must just be the wife. (Samantha)

For Samantha (and Steven), being 'the wife' means being sexually available to her husband and having to comply with his sexual demands. In many of the relationships in this study, disagreement about the amount of sexual activity in the relationship also led to conflict, so that, at times it became the rationale for marital infidelity by men, as the following illustrates:

But then again you know your wife sleep with you whenever it suits her, obviously ((inaudible)). I believe that um, sexual contact with your partner is a very very vital part of marriage. My wife don't think so. /.../ Let me be honest with you my dear, my wife don't give me sex if I ask for it. ((inaudible)) Um, for two years I've been faithful to my wife. As straight as straight can be after the interdict, I said well I'm not

gonna be that faithful person, anymore. ((Inaudible)) what I do is, shave, shower, get dressed off I go. And, I actually go get myself a woman to ((inaudible)). Although it's wrong um, I haven't been doing it like um every week or every second week ... (Craig)

Above, Craig discussed what he expected from a 'wife' – i.e. that she should be sexually available to her husband. He also stressed the importance of sexual contact in marriage. Craig drew on the discourse of the 'male sexual drive' in his rationalisation for why he was engaging in extra-marital sexual relationships. The "male sexual drive discourse" (Henriques et al., 1984, p. 231) is predicated on the idea that men's sexuality is directly linked to biological drives or forces beyond their control. Women, in contrast, are seen as the objects of this 'male sexual drive' discourse (ibid).

In South Africa, Wood and Jewkes (2001) found that for some young men, the achievement of successful masculinity involved having multiple sexual partners. This dynamic was played out similarly for Craig.

And strangely enough, I can honestly tell you ((inaudible)) to me it was just a means. (Inaudible) that is how I regarded my relationships with other women. With my wife it's different. /.../ Um, but yes it was just a means. It was either for the sex, it was either for the convenience, it was either for, the use of their car or their money. Here I find myself in a total different environment. (Craig)

Like the participants in Wood and Jewkes' study, Craig had a 'Mercedes Benz' (his wife) and other girlfriends described as 'cherries', which he used just for sex, convenience or money. Throughout his narrative, Craig drew attention to the differences between 'the wife' and the 'other' in his language usage. He frequently referred to his wife as 'my wife', rather than using her name or a pronoun. His language may also connote the objectification of 'the wife', with the husband as the 'owner' (Adams et al., 1995). In Craig's construction of the differences between his wife and the women he used 'for the sex' or 'for the convenience', the oppositional construction of femininity is apparent. It is otherwise known as the Madonna/whore dichotomy (Macdonald, 1995). In terms of this dichotomy, women are defined in terms of two extremes, as either sexually pure (the virgin or Madonna) or as sexually impure (the whore). These oppositional constructions are used to police women's adherence to traditional femininity (sexually pure and passive). Boonzaier and de la Rey (2003) showed how some men accused their partners of being whores as a way of attacking their lack of conformity to traditional femininity.

Craig also described his relationship with his wife as 'different' but without going into details. Why so? Simply put, there is an inherent double standard in the 'male sexual drive' discourse. Men achieve successful masculinity by having multiple sexual partners yet the expectation remains that their wives should be sexually pure. This double standard manifested itself when men accused their wives of being unfaithful. This was also a common justification for physical violence or other forms of abuse. For example:

But I mean he fights over stupid things. I really – you know sometimes then we go to church then I sit right next to him then there's just a little space between us then he fights over that. Yes I don't sit next to him because you know I've got somebody else, it's always about affairs. Always accusing me. Always, always, always. (Gina)

In sum, both women and men drew on hegemonic discourses of male and female sexuality, such as 'the male sexual drive discourse' and the marital sexual duties of wives. These discourses were employed to represent particular forms of masculine and feminine sexualities, where women's sexuality was the object of male control.

Notions of successful masculinity were embedded in sexual practices and discourses. Women constructed men's sexuality as active *vis-à-vis* their own as passive. Men's active sexuality was discussed (by women only) in the context of sexual coercion used against their woman partners. The issue of marital infidelity also emerged as important and seemed to be a means by which men could attain successful masculinity. Reviewing studies on the meanings of masculinity and sexual identity in Mexico, Szasz (1998) found that sexual prowess was seen as an important aspect of masculinity, particularly in situations where economic resources were scarce and that, for working-class men in particular, notions of successful masculinity were associated with having multiple sexual partners. A similar finding was evident in a South African study (Wood & Jewkes, 2001). Like the latter, the Mexican studies reviewed showed that the objectification of women, through the Madonna/whore dichotomy, was common. In terms of this dichotomy, to reiterate the point made above, women are viewed in terms of two extreme 'types'. The first type includes those who are sexually pure and whom men would like to marry and with whom they want to establish family ties. These women deserve respect and protection, and they are inscribed with passive sexuality (Szasz, 1998). The other group of women are perceived as promiscuous and sexually active. They were not

worthy to engage in committed, long-term relationships and men only used them for sex. These women were not respected but used as objects for sexual experimentation and pleasure (Szasz, 1998). In addition, the Mexican men who engaged in extra-marital sexual relationships did not consider themselves to be unfaithful. The men attempted to justify these relationships, by maintaining that they involved no emotional investment or attachment. Successful masculinity thus relies on the objectification and denigration of women.

Theorists have argued that men who are marginalized and live in poverty have difficulty in attaining cultural standards of masculinity (Bourgois, 1995; Weis, Centrie, Valentin-Juarbe & Fine, 2002). It then follows that men may perceive challenges to their masculine identities and develop a crisis in their gendered subjectivities – these feelings of powerlessness and insecurity may be translated into emasculation (Simpson, 1992). Women become the targets of the man's attempt to reassert his masculine identity. Issues of power and powerlessness are therefore central to men's as well as women's narratives of violence.

5.3.4 Gender and Power

Issues of power and control were central to how women and men constructed themselves and their partners. Men used particular strategies to characterise their partners as 'masculinised' (Anderson & Umberson, 2001), or as controlling, domineering and demanding. They may have characterised their partners in this manner because they were uneasy with women's disruption of the binary opposition of masculinity (authority) and femininity (submission) (Anderson & Umberson, 2001). Below, Clive conveyed a clear message about power and dominance in his relationship.

But what I'm saying to you now is that only thing – she's a stubborn woman. She don't want to listen to me. And that drives me crazy, ja. I can't take it. Because you are my wife you have to listen to me. You understand? And if you don't want to listen to me, what must I do? (Clive)

Clearly, in Clive's view, the 'wife' must obey her husband. This construction may also hold some religious significance since religious dogma and practices reinforce traditional gender standards. Female submission and male dominance are inscribed in religious constructions of 'wives/women' and 'men/husbands'. 'Good wives', in a biblical sense, are supposed to honour and obey their husbands. This may be particularly salient in Clive's situation, as he

claimed that he was a born-again Christian. In some respect, Clive's question (If you don't want to listen to me, what must I do?) provided a justification for his use of violence in the relationship. He also drew on the 'man as parent; woman as child' metaphor (Adams et al., 1995). His main concern seemed to be that his wife did not 'listen' to him. She may have been refusing to 'obey' him or to yield to his authority in the manner that a child should to a parent. Previously, Clive had also complained about the lack of sexual intimacy in his relationship and about how his wife Cynthia employed the strategy of denying him sexual access to her body. Thus, it is apparent that Clive's wife resisted passivity on many fronts and that he had difficulty responding to her assertiveness. Below, Max depicted his partner in a similar manner.

/.../ she wants me to do things the way she see it and to follow what she believes but she most probably will tell you that she feels that er er, I want to, you know. But then I um, I think that's where the clash came in because she wants to er, do, wants me to do this and that. She feels she's right, you know. (Max)

Max seemed to have trouble verbalising exactly how controlling or domineering he perceived his partner to be. Anderson and Umberson (2001) showed that men were sometimes unable to explain exactly how women exerted control, suggesting that it alluded to their fears of being controlled by a woman partner. In contrast, women described concrete practices that men employed to exert power in the relationship.

Steven always finds problems with me, with me. If it's the way I dress, if I (blow-dry) my hair. "Why are you blowing your hair all of a sudden? Why are you wearing, why are you wearing perfume? Who is at work? I must find out." You know, forever threats. (Samantha)

By characterising their partners as 'masculinised' or controlling, some men positioned themselves as emasculated victims, thereby also 'justifying' their use of violence.

/.../ um, I've had a flat ((apartment)) when we got married, she had a house. So we decided to move into the house. And I feel that was also very bad judgement on our side because she she would often use the fact that I was in her house and stuff like this which, made me feel, not insecure but I was in a sense emasculated to a certain extent. Your office is in my house. Um, don't close the door because that's part of my house, kind of thing, you know what I mean. And and she would openly use that, in an in an argument. Which um, well as I said it it, frustrated me tremendously. (Tony)

In addition, some men positioned themselves as having been victimised by the legal system. Women's strategies of dealing with the abuse often led to a variety of legal sanctions against their partners. These included arrest, court appearances, temporary detention or prison sentences. For men the legal consequences of their behaviour was a theme accentuated in many narratives. Oscar, for example, constructed the interdict (protection order) as a disciplinary mechanism utilised by his wife to keep him obedient to her.

It feels like ... this interdict is, if I if I open my mouth and like you have a argument with me you gonna threaten me with this interdict although I didn't, I wasn't physically violent, just emotionally. But she said no she won't as long as I behave. I mean what does that mean. I mean [Floretta: you feel like it's hanging over your head]. You don't feel secure with that thing. That's why I told told them yesterday ((men's group)), I don't like the idea I've got this interdict against me. I mean it's my own fault also but, there's times when I just sit and I think what did I do, to deserve this [Floretta: Mmm]. (Oscar)

Above Oscar depicted himself as being victimised by his wife through her use of legal measures against him. He also suggested that his movements were constantly being monitored by her and the legal system. In Glen's opinion, the legal system was clearly biased against men and '*for* women', as the following shows:

Er one thing that I'm finding very difficult to understand as well is the the the law in today's societies. If a woman runs to to you know to the police or something, she can go and speak so much a lies about you and they, all they do is they just come pick you up. There's no investigation nothing and then but we didn't have to go through this /.../ We didn't have to go through those things you know like some people went through some serious things, but no we didn't have to go through that. (Glen)

In general, some men tended to characterise themselves as powerless in relation to their partners who had the legal system 'on their side'. Petrik et al. (1994) suggested that men's violence against women is a reaction to feelings of powerlessness, having a low tolerance for being controlled and feeling a consequent need to exert control. Feminist researchers have long recognised that woman abuse concerns issues of power and gender (Bograd, 1990; Dobash & Dobash, 1979). Feminists portray violence against women as a re-enactment of male authority and female submission. Contemporary feminist theorists describe violence in terms of masculine and feminine gendered identities. Moore (1994) used poststructuralist theories of subjectivity to construct a theory about the relationship between interpersonal violence, gender and sexuality. She argued that individuals choose (both consciously and

unconsciously) to take up various subject positions and that these positions are linked to fantasies of identity (ideas about the type of person one would like to be) and fantasies of power and agency (linked to material, social and economic contexts). Moore (1994) argued that men use violence as a consequence of 'thwarted' gender identities. She described thwarting as: "the inability to sustain or properly take up a gendered subject position resulting in a crisis, real or imagined, of self-representation and/or social evaluation" (p. 151). According to Moore (1994), thwarting may result from the contradictions of various positions, pressure to conform to certain subject positions, and the failure of others to take up their 'proper' subject positions *vis-à-vis* oneself. She argued that men resolve a crisis in their gendered identities through the use of violence against their partners, as this imbues them with power and reinforces hegemonic masculinity. However, the reasons why some men choose to use violence to reassert their masculine identities, while others do not, still remains open to debate. Men's narratives of powerlessness and emasculation may in fact provide a retrospective justification for their violent behaviour. Furthermore, Connell (2002) argued that a huge shift in gender relations has not in fact occurred since men still wield power in most spheres of the social and global economy, and thus that a widespread crisis in masculinity is questionable.

5.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter has illustrated that the language men and women use to account for violence in their relationships is both similar and different. Men's narratives are conveyed to maintain and present positive identities, despite evidence to the contrary. Women also present positive forms of identity by downplaying the violence and sometimes employing justificatory strategies. To a large degree, men's and women's narratives encompass psychological discourses, reporting on men's behaviour as a result of a variety of internal states.

There were also some differences in the ways in which women and men defined and understood men's violence. I have argued that these definitional differences were constructed to serve particular functions. Women, for example, constructed psychological forms of abuse as more damaging because the resources to deal with this type of violence was limited. Men constructed physical abuse as the most serious form of violence and were able to resist the construction of themselves as perpetrators if they had not been physically violent. On the whole, women and men's narratives about violence and their relationships were designed in

order to emphasise coherence and to repress ambiguity and contradiction.

In their narratives, men and women highlighted their investment in a variety of discourses of masculinity and femininity. The narratives showed how individuals' investment in particular discourses were not straightforward. Women, for instance, situated themselves both inside and outside of traditional discourses of femininity through characterisations of themselves as both 'passive' and 'active'. The analysis in this chapter also showed that issues of gender and subjectivity were made salient at the dyadic level between the intimate partners. The subsequent analysis (in Chapter Six) will take this issue a step further by exploring couples' narratives, investigating how the individuals in the couple work together to construct a story of the relationship and the violence by which it is characterised.

Chapter 6

COUPLES' NARRATIVES OF VIOLENCE

In this chapter, I explore couples' narratives about their relationships. More specifically, this chapter is concerned with how the individuals in the couple worked together to construct a story of their relationship. Hydén (1994), who also conducted interviews with the individuals in a heterosexual couple, commented that their telling of the violence involved two separate histories and ways of explaining both the violence and their relationships. The researcher is thus presented with two stories that do not necessarily agree or even resemble each other and therefore has to make analytical sense of these stories. The following analysis involves an attempt to do so. There are two main sections in this chapter, structured according to the two 'types' of couples yielded by the analysis, namely the collaborative and incongruent types. These couple types are illustrated in terms of the thematic profiles for each type.

For the analysis presented in this chapter, within-case and across-case analytical methods (Ayres et al., 2003) were employed in order to assess how couples accounted for the violence in their relationships. Comparisons were made within individual cases, across the individuals in the dyad and across all the couples. Couple themes were derived by reading the couples' stories jointly. I employed a holistic reading of the content of the stories and explored issues that were significant for each individual and for the dyad as a unit. A thematic profile was created for each couple and these provided the basis for comparison across couples. The thematic profiles were compared and clusters of couples with similar configurations were identified. The analysis of couples' narratives yielded two different types of couple stories about their relationships. These story types also revealed a variety of thematic variations across couples.

Couple narrative style is an item on a narrative interaction scale¹⁰ created by Fiese and Sameroff (1999), who used it to assess the degree to which couples (or family members) jointly constructed a coherent story about their relationships. In this study, narrative coherence between individuals in the couple was assessed by looking at the degree of overlap

¹⁰ Fiese and Sameroff (1999) developed a coding system in order to assess family narratives. Their scale involves three sub-scales (namely, narrative coherence, narrative interaction and relationship beliefs), each with a number of sub-items. These scales were used to assess co-joint interviews, focusing on both interview process and content. Although co-joint interviews were not held for the couples in this study, the concept of couple narrative style was usefully employed in the current context.

Steven, Cynthia and Clive, and Octavia and Oscar). In these couples it was understood that the abuse was an almost inevitable part of their relationships.

Another couple chose to represent their narratives as stable over time. Their relationship was described as essentially unchanged (as the individuals were still married at the time of the interviews). Craig told his story in sequence by describing the three occasions when he physically abused his partner. Departing from the typically 'male' narrative (disjointed and episodic), Craig's narrative progressed in a linear sequence, with him telling coherent stories of each violent incident. Craig's narrative depicted things as essentially unchanged over the short time they were married. As a result of his partner's controlling behaviour and his own violence, the relationship could be evaluated as negative. His narrative, however, had a progressive micro-component as he described the positive changes in their relationship. In contrast, Celeste, Craig's wife, rarely told stories about the relationship. She employed episodic narratives to convey an overall image of her partner as psychologically troubled. To some degree, her narrative was also atypical, in that, unlike most of the other women interviewed, she did not tell a linear or sequential narrative. She also told habitual narratives about his controlling behaviour. Celeste's narrative took the form of a negative stability narrative as she described things as being the same over time. Their problems were visible at the beginning of their relationship and remained the same over time. According to her, there were almost no positive changes in Craig's behaviour. She characterised the relationship as 'unstable' and her partner as 'unpredictable'. Celeste suggested that, if things did not improve, she would end the relationship. The narrative mode adopted by Celeste and Craig reflected the state of the relationship at the time of the interviews. The problems in their relationship started during their dating and courtship and the situation remained almost unchanged for the three years of their marriage.

In contrast to the above, a few of the collaborative couples' stories contained differences in focus as well as in structure. The structure of individual women and men's narratives was also sometimes different. Anne and Alfred, for example, conveyed their stories in somewhat different ways. Alfred told a progressive (happily-ever-after) narrative about how he had battled to overcome the problems in their relationship and emerged victorious. He placed emphasis on individual agency and motivation as factors that assisted him to battle through his life. Alfred told very few coherent stories about the past, instead describing disjointed episodes. Alfred moreover chose to generalise about relationships and violence, rather than to

Alfred speak about his relationship in concrete terms. Anne, in contrast, spoke about how the relationship remained essentially unchanged (negative stability narrative). She described how Alfred had changed for short periods only. Essentially, he remained emotionally, verbally and physically abusive toward her. Anne told lengthy stories to describe the violence in the relationship, and also employed the habitual genre to characterise her partner in a particular manner (i.e. as abusive and vulgar). There was some overlap in the content of their stories, but they chose to focus on different aspects of their relationships within the interview context. The discrepancies in this couple's narratives, however, did not disrupt the overall story about a couple that had experienced problems in their relationship.

In collaborative narratives, then, the couple produced a co-joint story about the relationship. However, there may have been some discrepancies or differences of opinion, which were not necessarily resolved within the narratives (Fiese & Sameroff, 1999). Despite these discrepancies, though, the overall story about the relationship remained coherent and was not disrupted. The coherence that existed across the individual partner's stories is best illustrated by looking at the themes that characterised couples' narratives.

6.1.1 Victims and Perpetrators

How do women and men in a relationship characterise themselves and their partners? There are a number of overlapping themes that typify individuals' and couples' narratives. In the case of collaborative narratives, the ways in which the men and women partners characterised themselves and their partners were more similar than different.

6.1.1.1 Women Victims

Women usually characterised themselves as passive victims at the beginning of their relationships. Their partners, although sometimes according women blame, often concurred with these constructions. Octavia, for example, constructed herself as passive and in need of protection. In the account below, Octavia identified herself with abused women as a group and retrospectively questioned why she remained married to her partner, Oscar.

And um I was thinking I wonder if this is the reason why also because they stay asking – why do abused women stay with their husbands. And I was thinking I wonder the reason why I perhaps stayed with him is because a year after we started going out my mother passed away and it's most probably somebody I just ... got stuck on and then I just couldn't move away from it. I most probably feel that um if this marriage does end or whatever then it's like a failure most probably to me [Floretta: Mmm]. (Octavia)

Octavia drew on a parent-child metaphor, describing how her partner took over the role of a parent after her mother died. She also drew on the cultural discourse of femininity, inferring that she would have failed as a woman if she did not remain married despite her circumstances. Her husband concurred with her self-construction and depicted Octavia as passive and in need of his protection.

/.../ when her mother passed away, so I had to now I look after her because things was like, times were hard that time there by them /.../ (Oscar)

Vera described her mental state in similar terms at the beginning of her relationship to Vincent. She described how she experienced a sense of dissociation and helplessness in her situation.

/.../ I was on antidepressants and stuff and I didn't know what was happening to me at the time. Because I got married when I was only 19. And I had my son just before I turned 20 you know. (Vera).

Vincent, Vera's husband of ten years, described her in a similar manner.

She was very naïve in a lot of ways. She didn't have many boyfriends, she didn't get to see much of life. Before she knew it she was married, she didn't know how to deal with the situation, she was a baby herself. Meanwhile trying to live with two other babies. I just terrified her ((inaudible)). I think for her it mostly was that emotional abuse, the fear, not knowing what to expect. (Vincent)

Women, usually at the beginning of the violence, adopted a victim role. Many respondents in this study described themselves as passive and helpless in response to their partners' control. Later in the relationships, however, they learnt how to cope with the abuse, and through various attempts to end the violence, regained a modicum of strength and control over their relationships. This issue concurs with the literature in finding that women in abusive relationships are not merely 'passive victims', but are active agents with multiple strengths that allow them to cope with the violence (Mills, 1985; Kirkwood, 1993; Profitt, 2000).

Women's sense of themselves is also transformed as a result of dealing with an abusive partner and remaining in a violent relationship. Many of their men partners concurred with the women's characterisations, with some in fact describing a reversal of the victim-perpetrator relationship.

Women frequently experienced shock and disbelief when violence occurred for the first time at the beginning of their relationships. At this time, however, the abuser's level of control over his partner is perceived as pervasive, and the woman recognises very few options for dealing with the violence. Francis, for example, characterised herself as passive, helpless and scared when she recounted the abuse. She endured the abuse and maintained the silence for many years due to shame and humiliation. As Francis stated: "I was just you know like, most of the time crying because I I felt helpless in the beginning". Cynthia also constructed herself as helpless and passive at the beginning of her relationship. She attempted suicide and was depressed for a while after. She described a drastic transformation in her attitude after the suicide attempt, however, and decided that she would not let the abuse affect her. From then on she adopted a stance of emotional detachment and aloofness. She also mentioned that she refused sexual intimacy with her husband after she discovered that he was being unfaithful. It is common for women to change as they cope with the violence from their partners (Mills, 1985). Some women shifted from a victim identity to a survivor identity, in order to gain a positive sense of self despite their circumstances. It is interesting to note that many men also described aspects of individual transformation, either as a result of their encounters with social or legal intervention agencies or through their own motivation and drive.

6.1.1.2 Men Perpetrators

Most of the men in the collaborative category admitted to perpetrating some form of violence against their women partners, yet many chose to focus instead on the negative aspects of being labelled as a 'perpetrator' of woman abuse.

Um, ... it was more so much to expose who I was and why I was doing it and it wasn't a nice place to be, it wasn't a nice programme to be in. /.../ But um, this kind of thing is stigmatised in a big way [Floretta: Mmm], so um now more than ever [Floretta: Mmm]. So you have to search yourself in some way and know that you are now labelled and you are branded. (Vincent)

Oscar admitted to being violent and abusive toward his wife. However, he expressed some discomfort at the fact that others (such as neighbours, friends or family) who had witnessed his behaviour have come to view or label him as generally violent.

Because the people in the road already said, “no man you must rather go stay in (place of origin) because you belong there. You don’t belong in (current place) because every time you hitting the windows and tomorrow you say you sorry and all that.” (Oscar)

Octavia, his wife, stated that he was very quiet at the beginning of their relationship. She later described him as someone who had transformed into a generally violent person with almost no remorse for his violent behaviour.

... threatening the neighbours. He took something out of his pocket and he said um if I should come home he’s killing me and my brother because we put him out of the house. (Octavia)

Given that many men were unhappy about women’s use of legal intervention in the form of a protection order, it is not surprising that they were concerned with how they were labelled, i.e. as ‘perpetrators’. It is also from the label of ‘perpetrator’ that some men might derive a negative self-esteem. In their narratives, they consequently chose to outline how they had transformed as individuals, resisted the negative label and attempted to maintain a positive sense of self despite their violent histories.

Despite the problems in his relationship, for example, Max attempted to maintain a positive masculine identity, by indicating that he always provided for his family. Max also maintained a positive identity by constructing himself as someone who was not seriously violent but, rather, *only* used “intimidation and verbal abuse”. He stated that he had changed as a result of his participation in an abuser’s programme.

... you know I’m making (2) the, the right decisions and I can tell you this much that I will er strive to, whatever decisions I make that decisions will be (within) in the law. (Max)

6.1.1.3 Blurred Categories: Victims/Perpetrators

The victim or perpetrator categories are not mutually exclusive or occupied only by women or men, respectively. Both women and men in fact spoke about the blurring of these roles.

Distinctions between victims and perpetrators become blurred as both women and men construct themselves and the other as belonging to both categories.

In his story, Steven, for example, 'accepted' the label of perpetrator by admitting to violence against Samantha. However, he also took up the victim role by describing childhood circumstances, such as being rejected by his mother. He also characterised himself as a victim in response to his partner's controlling behaviour. At times, he described feeling helpless and passive in relation to his partner's control.

Don't I have a right to to to air my views anymore? And that is what it ended up becoming. If she says the door is blue and I say it's red, then, it's blue. I must change my colour-coding and I must ((inaudible)) because she say so. And I'm not cut out to be that type a person. To be, um manipulated all the time. I'm not that type a person I can take it for for some time. But then after a time when I see no you really taking it far then I cut it off. But she doesn't see it as she's taking advantage of me ((inaudible)) that's how she feels. That's why I say, I told her she needs counselling as well because she's just as corrupt as I am. But there's no one there to tell her that. I'm constantly having people telling me, what I'm doing is wrong. Constantly. If it's not her then it's her mother. If it's not her mother, then it's her. And so it goes on. Day in day out, day in day out. (Steven)

You see he blames other people for his problems. If it's not me, now it's my parents. You know. And um, ((long pause)) ag, I don't know I honestly think Steven it's his childhood. It's got, this has got everything to do with he his growing up. I think he's got some resentment that he his real father and his mother never got married then he was, he always when we were dating he would always – the step-son. He would always ((inaudible)). Nobody else did it but he would do it. He would make himself the stepson. That's the same what he does while we were staying with my parents now. (Samantha)

Samantha, rather than concurring with Steven's depiction of her as controlling, suggested that Steven was adopting a victim role by feeling sorry for himself and blaming others for his problems. She also drew on the understanding that Steven's behaviour could have been caused by problems in his family of origin. The example above seems to suggest that both individuals in a relationship cannot occupy the role of 'being a victim'. Samantha therefore had to construct another plausible explanation – that Steven only 'sees himself' as the victim, but clearly is not. At the same time, by minimising his violence, Samantha did not fully subscribe to the victim role herself (see also Chapter Five, pp. 128-129).

Some of the men described a reversal of roles in response to changes in power in the

relationship. In such cases, the woman was then constructed as the perpetrator – with the man as the victim.

And then she was fine then all of a sudden she's got this mood swing you know, and I can see it on her face, I know hey, here's kak (shit) coming my way again. Then my stomach starts turning again you know that type a thing. And it's a terrible feeling cause you dunno what to what to expect you know. You too afraid to speak your mind because it gets held against you you know. You can't get upset because then you must hear that you starting your shit again you know and ... why you screaming, why you swearing you know and ... it's just how I feel at the time. You know. It's my way of expressing my feelings because I don't know of any other way. (Steven)

The language that Steven used in the extract above clearly positions him in the role of a victim. He described emotions such as nervousness and anxiety as a result of not knowing what to expect from his wife. At the same time, however, Steven also mentioned that he screamed and swore in order to express his feelings.

Women mentioned a change from the roles they had occupied at the beginning of their relationships. These roles changed from initially passive to active, which included strategies to cope with their partners' abuse. Women also described how they transformed as individuals as a result of the abuse. In one couple, both partners concurred that the woman had changed as a result of her husband's abuse. Vincent thus claimed that Vera had changed from weak to strong and from passive to active and independent.

Forced my wife to become very independent and to become ((inaudible)). Her strengths have come out in this last few years. Er, but it's taken a lot of grey hairs on her. (Vincent)

Vera, too, mentioned that she had changed from being 'very soft' to 'hard' as a result of the abuse.

I can cope with things now that I could never cope with before. /.../ but it made me so hard, you know. (Vera)

Similarly, Rose constructed a shift in the relationship by describing changes in her sense of self. Initially she had depicted herself as passive and indicated that she always felt that she had to be submissive to her husband, Ralph. After obtaining more information about woman

abuse, however, she became aware of her rights as a woman. She described how she felt about the relationship and about her changing sense of self in the following way:

Now it's, we have a good relationship now but I don't think marriage, marriage wise it will work for us. It's too much, he did too much /.../ Made me hard. (Rose)

Ralph, Rose's partner, characterised changes in the relationship and in his partner as amounting to a reversal of roles. In the extract below, he described how they had discussed her decision to end the relationship.

She said: "No my mind is made up." I said to her: "Well you're in charge. You the one that's working, you the one that's looking after this family. If that's what you want I'm just glad," that's what I said to her, "I'm just glad that you capable of looking after yourself and this child." (Ralph)

It is not surprising that Ralph constructed a reversal of roles since he had recently completed the perpetrator programme, was unemployed and recently separated from his partner. He was, to some degree, powerless and was not attempting to or was unable to regain control in the relationship. It is also interesting to note that he seemed to equate a decision to end the relationship with economic or employment issues. His account seemed to suggest that, had Rose not been working, she would not have been able to decide to end the relationship.

6.1.1.4 Agency, Capacity and Resistance

A few of the couples focused on their own agency and capacity for strength. In her story, Tracy attempted to resist being constructed as an abused woman by constantly shifting between what she knew to be true for abused women or abusive men and what occurred in her own relationship.

I said to myself one of the the um the sort of er er promises I made to myself is that if, should it happen, I won't keep it a secret. Because I think that's one of the problems that battered women have is that they keep it a secret. They keep it a secret and it just continues. So, I didn't keep it a secret I made I made a a point of informing the church. All the people that I I was associated with at the church the the ministers at the church. Um, I told my, the only people I didn't tell was the people I work with. I didn't tell them about it cause I didn't think it was necessary but, the people my friends my family I told everyone about it. (Tracy)

Tracy identified herself with a community of abused women but yet, she also attempted to depart from the supposed norm by not being silent about the violence. In this manner, she claimed agency and empowered herself within a disempowering situation. She shifted from a negative to a positive identity.

Tony, Tracy's ex-husband, frequently outlined episodes and told habitual narratives of Tracy's verbally provocative or aggressive behaviour. In so doing, he located the responsibility for his violence with Tracy and resisted the characterisation of himself as an abuser.

I I felt that that, not unless she provoked me while I was in this rage would I really go and intentionally hit her. I wouldn't, I'm not the kind of person that would come home drunk and just hit on the wife or or or say where's my food or whatever the case is. I had to be extremely provoked to to sort of lash out at anybody. (Tony)

Tony and Tracy's characterisations of each other were very similar. They both described the other as being strong-willed or stubborn. Moreover, their characterisations of 'self' were also congruent. They focused on their own agency, strength, determination and capacity for action and decisiveness. It is possible to see how their stories cohered around particular themes that seemed relevant for them as a couple. In Tony and Tracy's case violence seemed to emerge as a result of a struggle for power or control in the relationship. As the discussion above showed, individuals in the collaborative category constructed the roles of victim and perpetrator in similar terms. The phases of the relationship were also understood in similar terms, as illustrated below.

6.1.2 The Cycle of Violence

Almost all couples mentioned a repeated cycle of violence that occurred in their relationships. Walker (1984) characterised the violent relationship as composed of three phases, namely the tension-building phase, the explosive phase and the honeymoon phase. The cycle of violence for some couples in this study involved vacillations between love and abuse. For others, it simply involved the process of the woman leaving and returning (with no acknowledgement of love from either party). Returning to, or accepting an abusive partner back was often attributed to feelings of sympathy or hoping for change.

... he came there again and he came to apologise and all that nonsense [Floretta: Mmm]. You know and um, he stayed again. And I allowed him to you know. (Pam)

Women's hope for change seemed to be a strong factor compelling women to accept abusive partners back. It is also consistent with the construction endorsed by some women that the abuse is not a consistent feature of the man's identity but rather a departure from the norm.

Every single time I thought: "Ok maybe, maybe he's just going through a bad patch, you know he will change, he will change." He never. (Vera)

Vera's narrative was markedly silent on the issue of love between herself and Vincent. Vincent, however, seemed wholeheartedly convinced that Vera loved him.

My wife loved me, she had sympathy. And um, I supposed that she rationalised it that it was the drugs causing it. /.../ So I just think she hasn't come to that point where she can trust me or where she feels safe about the issues, around me. I mean she clearly loves me but there's obvious – I'm not trying to be too secure about that but I'm trying to be honest about it. My wife loves me, she just doesn't know how to deal with things ... (Vincent)

Vincent's declaration of his wife's love was repeated a few times in his story. At the time of the interview, Vincent had been unemployed for a while and had been separated from Vera for more than one year. Despite this, he still hoped to reconcile with her. Vincent might have held on to the notion that his wife still loved him in order to minimise anxiety and to be optimistic about his future and their future together as a couple. Vera's behaviour may have also provided support for Vincent's world-view. After repeated cycles of separation and reconciliation and, in the last instance, more than a year of separation, Vera had not yet applied for a divorce.

For other couples, such as Oscar and Octavia, the relationship pattern was consistent with the cycle of violence described by Walker (1984). Both partners described a calm, quiet (although not necessarily loving) phase that frequently preceded violent outbursts. Similarly, Paul repeatedly suggested that a cycle of love and abuse characterised his relationship with Pam. At times, even after they divorced, they 'lived together as a married couple', until the arguments or fights recurred. Living together as a married couple for Paul meant being

sexually intimate with his partner. After the divorce, Pam moved out of the main bedroom and slept on the couch. He stated that when things were good, she would move back into the bedroom, and would later move out again “for no reason”. This constant vacillation between sexual love and abuse was a recurrent theme in Paul’s story.

Man when things are good, it’s like, then we make food together. Then I get treated like a man. Understand. The food gets brought to me. Good sex and all. Good sex I mustn’t forget to mention that ...
(Paul)

From the above, it seems apparent that Paul’s notions of manhood are intimately linked with ideas about sexual gratification and having other physiological needs catered for by a woman partner. Although his partner did not accord the same emphasis to their sexual relationship, she agreed that the relationship was characterised by phases of honeymoon, followed by violence and abuse.

... there were times when we were like, you know, living together again like you know a married couple and so. And then he would be sorry for things and then things will be okay and then just for a month or two months then it will be back again, like the usual. (Pam)

And after the divorce it was again loving, see. And then after a while then things get out of hand [Floretta: Mmm]. Maybe if we sleep together too much, now we get tired of each other again. (Paul)

It is apparent that joint marital life does not always come to an end after divorce, as some couples do continue living together. Francis and Frank were another example of this. Issues relating to the socio-cultural or structural environment are salient, as the lack of housing remains a huge problem in South Africa. This is particularly the case in the Western Cape province, where a housing crisis is currently being experienced. Access to housing is a limited resource in marginalized communities in particular. Couples therefore chose, or had no other option but to continue living together after the divorce. This might have complicated the relationship even further. In addition, some women (such as Francis) employed divorce as a strategy to end the violence, rather than to end the relationship. In her narrative, Francis declared that she did not divorce Frank because she wanted to ‘get away from him’. Instead, she divorced him because she wanted him to change his abusive behaviour. In her particular case, the strategy of divorce, along with other legal strategies, such as obtaining and enforcing the protection order, was successful to end Frank’s abuse toward her.

6.1.2.1 Dual Identities

The construction of dual identities for the abuser is linked to the cyclical dynamic of love and violence. Often, when women or men constructed a dual identity for the abuser, the other partner concurred with this depiction. For example, Tony portrayed himself as having a dual personality, as his violent actions were not consistent with his sense of self. He described himself as normally a non-violent person who, through provocation, could become violent.

I eventually went to FAMSA because I couldn't understand why I would react in such a spontaneous manner, under such pressure [Floretta: Mmm]. Do you see, to to become this monster ((laugh)) you you know what I'm saying. (Tony)

Above, Tony depicted himself as a normally 'good' person who was transformed into a monster by forces beyond his control. Tracy, in order to justify her decisions to return to Tony, also utilised the dual identity construction.

And um, although on the other hand I I knew that he was quite affectionate and loving on other occasions and that he seemed to be repentant, so um, I you know I had great difficulty making up my mind. (Tracy)

It is clear that both Tracy and Tony employed the dual identity construction, albeit for different reasons. Tony employed the Jekyll and Hyde metaphor in order to characterise himself as normally non-violent. Tracy did so to rationalise her decision to return to him after she had left the relationship for a while. For other couples, such as Rose and Ralph the abuser's dual persona emerged as a result of his consumption of alcohol.

/.../ just when he's drunk. When he's sober he's a totally different person. /.../ You can ask him, he will clean the entire house for you. He will do everything for you, when he's sober. But alcohol and him ... (Rose)

... when I'm sober I'm a totally different person. (Ralph)

The above extracts show that partners in the dyad often co-construct some duality in the abuser's identity. In Rose and Ralph's cases, they even used the same words: "totally different person." The functions of these constructions, however, differed for men and women. Men, on the one hand, depicted a dual persona in order to deny culpability and to

present a non-violent self. Women, on the other hand, were invested in this characterisation in order to 'justify' their decisions to stay with or return to their partners.

6.1.3 Couples Accounting for Violence

As the couples saw it, there were multiple causes of the violence. The individuals in the dyad often confirmed each other's constructions and delineated multiple and overlapping reasons for the 'causes' of the violence in their relationships. They also co-jointly produced narratives about these.

6.1.3.1 Damaged Individuals

Many women, in describing their partners and men, in constructing themselves, attributed their violent behaviour to psychological disturbances. This is a common strategy found in other studies too, as the problem of woman abuse is 'psychologised' (Palmary, 1999). For Vera, Vincent's problems and the abuse resulted from a host of psychological issues. She characterised him as 'sick' and abusive.

... I think there's issues deep down there that people don't know ... (Vera)

In some respects Vincent concurred with this description when he spoke about the negative emotions he experienced, as well as about his contact with psychiatric services.

/.../ a lot of hidden emotional issues /.../ there's a lot of condemnation, there a lotta shame. There's a lot of pain ... (Vincent)

Throughout his narrative, Vincent recounted negative and painful emotions related to his background, his relationship and his feelings about himself. These emotions included anger, shame, humiliation, pain and self-loathing. He described his abuse of drugs as an escape from reality. Similarly, Steven characterised himself as psychologically damaged. He described emotions such as anger, frustration, rage, self-pity, thoughts of self-harm and suicide ideation. He acknowledged that he had a 'temper' problem but denied that he was the only one at fault. Samantha concurred that Steven's temper was an important issue and she also described him as 'psychopathic'.

It is notable that almost all the women attributed some of the violence to the man's psychological state. However, only two men (Vincent and Steven) concurred with these characterisations. These men were separated from their partners at the time of the interviews and were hoping to reconcile. They were also the same men who presented as remorseful and who consistently represented themselves as both victims and as perpetrators. They seemed willing to give up the male ideal of always being 'in control' or dominant, and therefore were not averse to characterising themselves as victims. These characterisations were achieved by means of 'appeals to insanity' or psychological damage. Thus, two types of 'men victims' seemed to emerge – one being a victim as a result of powerlessness and the other being a victim as a result of psychological damage.

6.1.3.2 Dysfunctional Families

Many other studies of woman abuse have discovered a significant relationship between men witnessing violence against their mothers and later perpetrating violence against their own partners (Abrahams, 2002; Kalmus, 1984; Skuja & Halford, 2004). Although family violence is not a prerequisite for future abuse, violence may indeed be a learned response to conflict. In this study, both partners often concurred that the man's childhood history of violence or dysfunctional relationships may have contributed to his current behaviour.

I've um grew up with the with my parents and er that was also like my father was also drinking and um there I also witnessed like abuse in the family, swearing and er [Floretta: with your mother?] That's correct yes. My father used to hit my mother and all that stuff. But, um in the in the old end actually we we grew up believing that it was right [Floretta: Mmm]. That the the the husband must hit the wife that is how we grew up and that is how we were brought up. And the drinking was also playing a very er big role in in the relationship and er my mother and father they were also married till my mother couldn't also um take it anymore. And she also left left my father [F: Mmm]. And er we all we all moved with my father with my mother. And they got divorced also and we also had to move around looking for place and all that stuff. (Frank)

Frank and his wife had been divorced for about two years but they continued to live together. In the extract above, it is apparent that Frank somehow connected his mother's experiences to his wife's and his own to his father's. He stated that his mother "couldn't **also** take it anymore" and that she "**also** left" his father and that "they got divorced **also**". By using the adverb 'also', then, Frank connected his mother's experiences to an unnamed other, namely

his wife. Below, Francis connected Frank's behaviour to his abusive father's.

And um his mother told me that his father was exactly the same. His mother told me that Frank is going to follow in his father's footsteps. (Francis)

Many of the men in this study similarly linked their present violence to their troubled childhoods. Forty percent of the sample stated that there had been conflict in their families of origin or that their fathers or stepfathers had been abusive either toward them, their mothers, or both. Given that these men were involved in perpetrator programmes, it is not surprising that they would link their own violence to the conflict or violence in their families of origin. In many of these programmes, after all, men are encouraged to link their present behaviour to the actions and influence of significant others in their past. It is encouraging that some men did make connections between their violent pasts and their current behaviour, as this link may provide the impetus for change in men's current behaviour. Men's past experiences might, on some level, provide a mitigation for violence, and could also be understood in terms of the theory of intergenerational violence, namely that witnessing or being the victim of violence in one's family of origin is likely to lead to the later perpetration of violence against an intimate partner (Skuja & Halford, 2004)

Some women, rather than locating the source of the partner's problem with his abusive father, inferred that their husbands might have had dysfunctional relationships with their mothers. They attributed the problem to a rejecting or abusive mother.

He's got something against his stepfather because the mother probably gave more attention to the stepfather and sent him away [Floretta: Mmm] to a home for naughty children. (Rose)

If his mother didn't look after him as a child that's not my responsibility today, to look after him, to make sure that he's okay, you know. (Vera)

We then went to this um counsellor and as we started um revealing what was happening in the relationship and that um, it it was ... it was uncovered or it became more clearer to me that it was um, a lot of his past being replayed in the current relationship. And what actually happened in his past or how he was reared um, his mother was very abusive and he never received love. (Celeste)

In the previous chapter it was revealed how some women adopted a mothering role in relation

to their partners, and how this served the function of maintaining abusive relationships. Accounts of wives taking on mothering roles vis-à-vis their partners were absent from these women's husbands' narratives (Ralph, Vincent and Craig). Some men mentioned that they had problems with their fathers or stepfathers.

My stepfather stepped in when I was about five, then he gave me a tough life you know, constantly yelling, constantly screaming at me, no patience, we never did father-son things. When my sister came I was basically just, one side. When my mother and my father had arguments, about me, I went with my grandmother to go and stay with my auntie because of my father's differences with me. ... And whenever my father and I have differences then my mother's never there to cover for me, she's never there to stand up and tell him: "Hey but, you know this is actually my son you know and-." Never ever. (Steven)

In the extract below, Samantha concurred with her partner's account.

And um, ... and um, yes when he was three years old he had to stay by other people cause his stepfather couldn't take him ((tolerate him)). Now apparently he and his sister had to stay with a woman and according to him it was because the stepfather couldn't take him. Now you think you a mother, ... will you now let that go on for years and years just to satisfy a man? [Floretta: Mmm] A three year-old boy. What's a three year-old boy, what can a three year-old child do to a grown-up man? Hey? (Samantha)

It may be painful or anxiety provoking for some men to admit to having rejecting or abusive mothers, with the result that, the problem is located with the 'abusive' step-father. In Steven's case, however, he did seem to acknowledge that his mother rejected him *because* of his stepfather. However, he may have had difficulty in expressing any anger toward his mother because of this rejection. Samantha's depiction of Steven's case is also interesting in that she explicitly constructed him as victimised by a rejecting mother and by his stepfather. It is interesting that she acknowledged his childhood victimisation here, although elsewhere she was reluctant to construct him as a victim (see page 156 in this chapter). It seems that Samantha made a distinction between a helpless three year-old child and a violent adult who was victimised in childhood. She refused to relate his childhood victimisation to his current abusive behaviour, as this would evade his responsibility for the violence against her.

A broader socio-cultural issue is also evident in the above example, in that Steven's mother sent him to live with an extended family member because of her partner at the time. In many economically marginalized communities in South Africa, it is not unusual for extended

family members, particularly grandparents, to rear their children's children. Reasons include impoverished circumstances of the biological parents, biological parents that are too young, parents working in other cities or, in this particular case, because the child was born out of wedlock or from a previous relationship, and the mother remarried. In the latter situations, the child often does not become incorporated into the new family and may have infrequent contact with her/his biological mother. Gendered norms have a great influence too, as the mother has to 'give up' her biological child in order to make her new relationship successful. As I have also shown elsewhere, the maintenance of a successful heterosexual relationship is also an imperative for successful femininity.

6.1.3.3 Mutuality and Responsibility

Although men admitted to perpetrating violence against their partners, they did not necessarily accept sole responsibility for their own behaviour. For some couples (Tracy & Tony; Samantha & Steven), for example, violence was depicted as largely expressive. The man's violence was depicted as resulting from extreme provocation by the woman partner. Although men placed more emphasis on the provocative element, women concurred to some extent and the interactions were presented in a systemic manner, in which both partners held some responsibility for the final outcome. In their narratives, Tracy and Tony presented their interactions as a recurring struggle for power in the relationship.

/.../ if I didn't agree with him on things, on everything then he would try and try and try and try and prove his point, prove his point and if I still didn't back down and unfortunately I'm the kind of woman that digs my heels in. (Tracy)

But um, there were other issues. Difference, any difference of opinion would would lead up into an argument. Ja. Any difference of opinion. (Tony)

Tracy and Tony described a relationship contaminated by constant conflict and disagreement. The disagreement sometimes arose out of very mundane household issues or decisions. These disagreements could not be amicably resolved and frequently led to violence. Given that there was constant conflict in the relationship and neither partner wanted to 'back down', the parties concerned suggested that they held joint responsibility for the violence.

I I felt that that, not unless she provoked me while I was in this rage would I really go and intentionally hit her. (Tony)

I I did acknowledge that you know it it might have been wrong of me to have screamed like that or embarrassed him or to even have shoved him or scratched him. I did acknowledge that. (Tracy)

Violence is represented as a reaction to being provoked and the abuser is depicted as being in an uncontrolled state, thereby minimising his culpability. In this way, violence is explained at both the psychological (expressive violence) and the interpersonal (as a result of marital conflict or provocation) levels. In a similar vein, both Rashieda and Rafiek admitted to perpetrating physical violence in their relationship – they moreover constructed the violence as a mutual endeavour.

We fought a lot already. We argued and fought a lot (Rafiek).

Rashieda mentioned that she frequently fought back with violence, but she also acknowledged that this strategy was ultimately ineffective as the situation usually worsened.

But I fight back because I just made up my mind whenever he's gonna give me I'm just gonna just hit him back you know. And it's just something I've I want to let go of that but the minute we see each other we start getting into that intense fights. (Rashieda)

It is reasonable to assume that the men did perhaps want and expect women partners to react passively and helplessly to their control and abuse. Francis, like Rashieda, spoke about how things escalated when she attempted to fight back.

/.../ there was a time there came a time that I was, started fighting back. But that was times when he got very very, very angry at me. (Francis)

When violence is constructed as a mutual activity, both partners feel obliged to accept some blame and responsibility for the final outcome. In general, men often maintained that the responsibility for the violence should be shared between themselves and their partners.

I wouldn't say I'm mostly to blame for it because you know sometimes I ignore her then then you know sometimes she used to slap me first you know and stuff and then then er ... things get out of hand. (Frank)

At times, women confirmed that they might have been jointly responsible. They were more likely to do so, however, when they pointed to their own use of violence, as in Rashieda and Rafiek's case.

I'm not blaming him completely I take my responsibility, my share of responsibility I take. Because when we have an argument, you know its like um ... the provoking side and and the fighting side and it just don't stop until it really gets ugly. (Rashieda)

It is also interesting to note that some of the women who confirmed their partners' constructions of the violence as mutual (Rashieda) did not characterise themselves entirely as 'victims' in their relationships (see above). This is because, if the women felt jointly responsible for the violence, they could not claim sole victim status.

At times, however, women described violence that they had directed at their partners (Anne and Cynthia), but these episodes were absent from men's accounts.

And er January he started again. Fine, I left him. I left him, carry on. The second week in February we went down to his mother's house. And there he started getting rude again to me. He shouldn't have done that. So I hit him. I sat on top of him and I hit him. (Anne)

Comes in at night, kick. "You've got another man." And to the children, "Your mother's got another man and she thinks she's all that." And then it results in a fight. And I don't stand still I hit him back. I say: "You forgot how I burned you with boiling water." I don't want to make a issue out of it but just remember. This time I'll kill you. (Cynthia)

It is not surprising that these women's partners, Alfred and Clive, characterised them as controlling and domineering. These men did not mention their wives' violence toward them during the interviews, though. This might be because they experienced embarrassment or shame at experiencing violence from their women partners (see Chapter Five, pp. 117-118). Masculinity seems to be characterised by much ambiguity and contradiction. Men struggle to accept the label of 'perpetrator', yet are also reluctant to admit to being victimised.

6.1.3.4 Marital Conflict

Marital conflict is positively correlated with violence in intimate relationships (Heise, 1998). Some individuals alluded to incompatibility between themselves and their partners, as well as to different expectations from marriage. These varying expectations resulted in conflict, which was not adequately resolved, and which thus led to violence. Tracy and Tony, for example, constantly alluded to irreconcilable differences or incompatibility between themselves. On the one hand, Tony felt that, as a Christian, he was entitled to take the lead in the relationship and that his wife should follow. Tracy, on the other hand, felt that if she did not agree with Tony, she was entitled to voice her opinions. With two individuals who have different marital expectations, a general state of conflict or disagreement might be common. Both Tony and Tracy alluded to this by describing conflict over minor, routine issues, such as having cupboards built. Tony described this general state of conflict by indicating that, “any difference of opinion would lead up to an argument”. Often, the verbal disagreements about their joint married life (household, financial etc.) would lead to an episode of violence.

Tony’s macro narrative about incompatibility between himself and Tracy also revealed his expectations and definitions of marriage. In Tony’s view, his marriage ended because it did not conform to the traditional ideal, in terms of the roles of the husband and the wife. He felt that Tracy’s dominance and controlling behaviour was ultimately the reason why their relationship did not work. Tony was also conveying a moral message in his narrative, namely, that, in order for a relationship to work, the partners have to conform to traditional roles for men and women. In her macro narrative, Tracy expressed conflict between being an abused woman and a liberated woman. She drew on the former when she attempted to portray the severity of Tony’s actions. She strategically utilised the latter construction when she wanted to emphasise her own agency and power. Tracy’s construction of the ‘liberated woman’ also coincided with her expectations of marriage. In her view, marriage should involve emotional intimacy, equality and reciprocity, which Tony was unwilling or unable to provide.

For Mary and Max, marital conflict also seemed to arise as a result of varying expectations about marriage and family life. Mary expected her partner to support her in the marital tasks and decisions, such as running the household or taking care of their children. She argued that

Max did not meet these obligations. She took responsibility for making all the major decisions because she felt that he was not supportive of her. Early in the relationship, childcare was her sole responsibility. Throughout the marriage, Max devoted his time to the church, his natal family, or to his friends and drinking.

...there were times you know our early relationship where I felt um, the (children) wasn't just my responsibility. I felt that it was his responsibility as well. I felt that um it was a shared responsibility and um, er er, it was a shared responsibility and I felt at that time that that um, most of the responsibility actually rest on me, me. (Mary)

In his narrative, Max spoke about relationships in general and declared that successful relationships involved joint decision-making, equality and responsibility for household duties. In Mary's view, however, Max's ideas about equality did not extend to the household and child-care duties. Mary also expected that, once married, Max would put his conjugal family first, yet she felt that he remained emotionally loyal and financially supportive of his natal family rather than to her and their children. This resulted in much conflict between her and them. These different expectations about marriage also led to the conflict in the relationship.

Um, I found out in in the time that we were married that um, ... er Max takes responsibilities its almost as if he's, he takes the responsibility of his mom and of his sister, of caring and looking after them. In this process that I feel that he's neglecting me and my family in the process because him looking after them. Not caring only but also financially, he would look after them. (Mary)

Disagreements over finances were also a major source of conflict for Mary and Max. This was elaborated upon by Mary, but only briefly alluded to by Max. For other couples, such as Clive and Cynthia, conflict over resources, particularly economic and material resources, were also a source of major disagreements. For Cynthia, ownership of resources such as the house seemed to be important to her sense of independence and identity. She claimed that she was responsible for obtaining the house (by negotiating bureaucratic channels) and therefore felt entitled to claim ownership. She was furthermore responsible for paying the bills and supporting the family during the times when Clive was unemployed or not supporting her financially. Cynthia thus attempted to exert control over the home by asking Clive to leave after an argument. He often refused to do so.

At the time of the interview, Cynthia expected to obtain a large sum of money as a result of her retrenchment from work, and she stated that her partner was not entitled to any of it. Clive characterised his wife as domineering and indicated that, although Cynthia had always claimed ownership of their home, he had contributed to it as well. He also complained that she exerted control over their finances and that she became 'bossy' when she was financially empowered. Much of the marital conflict individuals reported on in this study resulted from women's challenges to men's domination in their intimate relationships, a finding similarly reported in Abrahams et al.'s (2004) study.

6.1.3.5 The Dynamics of Power and Control

For many couples the man's violence was mostly instrumental – in other words, used as an expression of male authority. Violence is thus used to fulfil the socially expected roles of the 'husband' and to monitor women's adherence to the roles of the 'wife'. Craig, for example, admitted to questioning his partner's movements. Celeste mentioned that he became even more controlling after she had found a new job. She thus created a tension between control (which he attempted to exert over her) and powerlessness (which he felt in response to situations in his life). His exertion of control through monitoring her movements was also related to the maintenance of gender roles. For example, Craig was angry that Celeste worked late, as he felt it was not justified. He expected her to be home with her husband and child. This issue of violence being used as a means of control was relevant to most of the couples in this study.

It all comes basically to one thing ... at the end of the day we just all wanted to be in control. And we just couldn't accept like we wrong. I mean I was like that. I just had to be in control of everything. I believed that I was the man in the house and ... now it's totally different. (Ralph)

In Ralph's account above, he identified with 'abusers' as a group and described how the issue of violence was generally related to control. It is likely that this account of his behaviour may be a rehearsed story or an internalisation of the social or institutional discourses emerging from his participation in a perpetrator programme. Ralph's partner, Rose, supported his construction of 'the man being in control' by mentioning how she used to perceive gender relations in marriage.

I always used to think women must be like that you know. They must, if the man says sit then you must sit.
I always used to believe that. (Rose)

In relationships where men admit to using violence against women partners and where material disparities exist, issues of powerlessness and control are frequently implicated. Vincent, for example, experienced a lack of control over his life, through the failure of his relationship and his unemployed status, amongst other things, and seemed to experience helplessness as a result. In order to feel powerful or in control, he became violent. His story encompassed depictions of control over his wife, on the one hand, and a lack of control regarding other spheres of his life, on the other hand.

My life wasn't working so I needed to control everything. It gave me, an edge because I was in control, trying to control a situation, that was uncontrol, controllable. So I needed to, to, ... I needed to mould the situation because, I, a lot of me knew that it was, it was a situation that – sounds very ironic when I try to say now. Deep down I knew I wasn't in control of it so I needed to have some control over it [Floretta: Mmm]. ((inaudible)) So I needed to call the shots. (Vincent)

Vera expressed the duality between weakness and strength in her relationship with Vincent in a similar manner. She too struggled between the contradictions of strength versus weakness. She had had to accept primary responsibility for the family and running of the household because of Vincent's irresponsible behaviour, such as his drug-taking sprees. She thus had to be strong. His abusive and controlling behaviour, however, rendered her weak. She thus vacillated between two extremes – just as her partner Vincent did.

And he just partied it (the money) out and drugged it out. [Floretta: It became your responsibility.] It, everything, since we got married, he shifted onto me. And when things didn't work out, he blamed me for it, you know. (Vera)

Although being in control of their lives was important for both Tony and Tracy, they both described times when they were 'out of control'. Tracy often lost control when she could not reason with Tony, and then she had a verbal outburst. Tony, on the other hand, described a lack of control at the times when Tracy provoked him. Tony thus vacillated between the extremes of intentionality and spontaneity, and between control and a loss of control.

Ah, I ((long pause)) I don't think that I would do anything different, I always felt that my actions were always thought out, that I was always conscientious when I did my thing and there were times that I was provoked beyond my own limits, not even [Floretta: when you were out of control]. When I was out of control. Ok. And I don't think if anybody provoked me today I would remain in control irrespective. (Tony)

In his macro narrative, Tony utilised a number of rhetorical and linguistic devices in order to highlight his holistic theme of a 'loss of control'. He employed particular forms of language to mask his own violence and to accentuate his uncontrollable responses to provocation. His powerlessness could, however, be juxtaposed with his own agency and decision-making capacity, which he also accentuated in his story, and which could in turn be contrasted with Tracy's dominance and her controlling personality. He consistently chose to characterise her as controlling and domineering, or as masculinised. His position in this regard was one of feeling emasculated.

... she's a very forceful person in that she she won't respect me, my privacy and that kind of thing...(Tony)

Tracy, in contrast, constructed herself as strong-willed and opinionated.

I think education also plays a role in in how we interacted because he he he chose to marry an educated woman. Who wasn't going to just accept anything. He could've chosen differently. Maybe if he chose differently, life would have been different for him. But there were certain things that I I wasn't willing to accept and um, I I made my opinion very clearly known. (Tracy)

In some relationships, violence was depicted as the result of power disparities between partners. As a result of these disparities, the relationships did not conform to the expected traditional relationship type (man-dominant; woman-submissive). In these relationships, men usually perceived their partners as controlling and domineering. Men also used violence in order to reassert their expected dominance in the relationship. For Clive, the major problem in their relationship was that Cynthia was controlling and did not value his opinions. He described the problem as follows:

But my problem is that, she don't want to listen to me. I spoke to her several times I said: "Cynthia come here. Come sit next to me." "No I don't want to." But the thing is that, she don't want to give me a hearing when I talk the right things to her. (Clive)

Given that Cynthia did not value his opinions and that she maintained her independence, Clive felt his position within the relationship was undermined. Clive's obsession with his partner not 'listening' to him invokes images of a parent-child relationship, in which obedience and disobedience issues dominate. It is also interesting to note that Cynthia declared that she enforced the interdict in order to teach Clive a lesson because he was 'disobedient'. Cynthia responded to Clive's claims about control by making it clear that she was proud to be in charge of her own life. She maintained her economic independence and, by refusing to be sexually intimate with him, she maintained control over her own sexuality as well.

Income and power disparities seemed to be a source of conflict in Max and Mary's relationship too.

And um, I must also mention the fact that um I do get more pay than Max because in that also I feel that also has an effect on our relationship. [Floretta: Mmm] That he, I think he feels that that that, he feels that I'm superior or whatever I feel because I'm now earning more money. And that is a big factor in in in our problems also that we, that we have. (Mary)

Um, through the years, from my point of view, through the years you know um, I believe that she wanted to be in control /.../ (Max)

Like Tony, Max also characterised his partner as 'masculinised' and very domineering. He responded to this by being aloof and emotionally detached. Rather than confront his wife about her controlling behaviour, Max decided to withdraw. His detachment from the relationship was consistent with her characterisation of him as unsupportive and, in his opinion, was a justified response to her domineering behaviour.

Now I know for a fact that er, I believe it's our car, you know. I believe that I also paid for it. But one day she decided that it is, her car. It's her car. I just don't get in the car anymore and I just don't get involved with the car anymore. You know. There was a couple a times that she asked me to come and I just said no, I don't, you know. And of course it's eating on her, you know. (Max)

The issue of power and control in abusive relationships is multiple and dynamic. In many cases, violence is a result of the man attempting to exert some form of control, both in the

relationship and over his partner. The above also revealed that in some relationships violence resulted from a struggle for power by both partners. Issues of control also became problematic when women departed from the gendered norm and adopted and maintained positions of power *vis-à-vis* their partners.

6.1.3.6 Alcohol and Violence

The theme of alcohol abuse was salient for many of the couples in this study. In other studies, too, it has been found that excessive alcohol consumption is associated with men's violence in intimate relationships in various ways (Heise, 1998; Jewkes, 2002). The consumption of alcohol impairs judgment and diminishes inhibitions. When accounting for violence after the fact, alcohol consumption may also provide an excuse for violent behaviour in that men may expect to be held less accountable for their actions when these were perpetrated under the influence of alcohol (Jewkes, 2002). In many cases in this study, the man's consumption or abuse of alcohol was described as having contributed to his violent or abusive behaviour. In Chapter Five, we saw that the man's consumption of alcohol provided the impetus for a characterisation of him as both 'good' and 'bad'. In addition, the man's consumption of alcohol may also lead to marital conflict, which is positively correlated with wife assault (Heise, 1998; Jewkes et al., 2002).

So she skel (scold at) me and I tell her look here man leave it and I've got a drink in and all I wanna do I just wanna go lie down, sleep it off. And you know a woman is like, you drink maybe too much and then she's gonna start moaning. "If you don't want to stop I am going to leave you," and you know and all that. She threatening me she's going to leave me and, so once I just gave her a smack. (Oscar)

Men expect their partners to leave them alone when they have consumed alcohol, as a confrontation with the intoxicated man could result in violence.

/.../ sometimes when I'm in a in a drunk mood then you know. And that's the time when she was looking for trouble with me. Instead of leaving me alone you know. (Frank)

Women, in contrast, were unhappy with men's consumption of alcohol, as it often resulted in their being away from home for extended periods. In addition, household finances were sometimes used to support their habits, when these resources were already scarce. Francis, for example, linked her husband's abuse of alcohol with his marital infidelity, referring to it as,

“drinking, moving, going out with girls.” For both Francis and Frank, alcohol (albeit for different reasons) was a significant contributor to the violence. Francis understood alcohol to be a reason for the abuse, whereas Frank understood it to contribute to the abuse because Francis would “look for trouble” with him when he had been drinking.

Similarly, for Cynthia and Clive, alcohol played an important role in his verbal abuse against her. She described his use of alcohol as the main source of conflict in their relationship. According to her, he abused her financially by allocating economic resources to his alcohol habit, rather than to the household. For Clive, the disinhibiting effects of alcohol were significant. He admitted that alcohol was indeed the cause of the abuse. Clive thus ascribed his loss of control to his alcohol consumption and indicated that he could not always remember or be held accountable for his actions. He also agreed with his partner that his alcohol use caused arguments, which in turn led to verbal abuse such as swearing.

Alcohol consumption may also allow a man to claim that he lost control over his senses, thereby allowing him to deny culpability for his actions. Ralph, for example, described various incidents where he did not know what he had done, and where he later ‘came to his senses’. He also spoke about not being able to recall certain aspects of the violent episodes. Similarly, Paul suggested that memory loss may result from the consumption of alcohol.

But serious things didn’t happen. But if she could speak now then she would be able to tell you many things because most of the time then us men do things (when) we are drunk. See, now we go to sleep and tomorrow we don’t even know what we did. (Paul)

Pam, though, did not mention her partner Paul’s consumption of alcohol as causally related to the violence.

In conclusion, then, the above section has revealed that the collaborative couple’s story is characterised by both similarities and differences in how women and men constructed their relationships and the violence, which characterised their relationships. Nonetheless, these differences did not disrupt the overall flow of couples’ narratives about the cessation or continuation of joint marital life or the ‘causes’ of violence as they saw it. Individual partners’ narratives were, for the most part, consistent in how they explained and accounted for the violence in their relationships. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the

analysis of couples' narratives also revealed a second type of story about violent relationships, which will be discussed in the next section.

6.2 *Incongruent Narratives*

The incongruent or disengaged narrative reflects major disagreements or conflict with only minimal overlap in the stories told by individuals in a relationship. In these cases, the 'couple's story' is difficult to discern. Incongruent narratives are characterised by one partner's (usually the woman) telling of serious incidents of violence or abuse. The other partner does not allude to any serious violence and constructs their 'problems' as routine relationship issues, such as communication problems. Thus, there were fundamental differences between the individuals in terms of the content of their narratives.

The form or structure of individual partner's narratives was also very different. The woman often employed a regressive or negative stability narrative, whereas the man employed a regressive-progressive or positive stability narrative. Glen and Gina, for example, utilised different forms of narrative to convey their relationship stories. Glen primarily told a progressive (happily-ever-after) narrative of two individuals who had experienced minor relationship problems, such as a lack of communication, but who later overcame these obstacles. The narrative genre he employed was mostly episodic – stitched together by the theme of 'a lack of communication'. He did not tell any concrete stories about the past, and his narrative was disjointed and inconsistent at times. At the macro level, Gina told a negative stability narrative that remained essentially the same over time. Her narrative started with a regressive component describing Glen's negative change in personality after they married. The narrative later stabilised, as Gina told of how the abuse "went on" and is "still going on". Although Gina declared that Glen had changed for short periods, she stated that this was simply to manipulate her in order to return after she had left. In her story, moreover, Gina constantly shifted between the past and the present to convey an overall picture of Glen's abusiveness and in order to re-evaluate her relationship. At the micro level, her narratives (within the larger narrative) were largely habitual, told in order to illustrate how things generally were and to characterise her partner as abusive.

There was a huge lack of symmetry in the joint marital project of the three incongruent

couples. There was almost no overlap or similarity in how men and women in the dyad spoke about the relationship in terms of the underlying themes. They seemed to tell parallel or conflicting stories about their relationships. The themes present in these stories included representations of women as victims and men as non-violent or 'blameless'. Furthermore, men referred to relationship or communication problems, whereas women described multiple forms of violence in their relationships. These themes then, rather than displaying consistency within couples, as was the case for the collaborative narratives of the 12 couples above, were more coherent across genders.

6.2.1 Victims and Perpetrators

Men attempted to assert non-violent and positive identities in a manner consistent with the lack of detail they provided about the abuse or violence that might have occurred in their relationships. Glen, for instance, maintained a positive identity, and depicted himself as eager, willing to learn and to change, as well as an active agent in his own life and relationship. He also constructed himself as blameless and non-violent. Gina was almost absent from his narrative, however. Similarly, Shafiek described how he was willing to learn from the abuser's programme and how he attempted to implement the things he had been taught. He also constructed himself as non-violent and blameless.

I learnt about decision-making and safety plans and I took it home. And I told her, showed her how it should be at home. It's not necessary for me to make all the decisions, or her. Both of us can make a decision. Both of us must do it together. (Shafiek)

Shafiek disclosed that he had been court-mandated to attend the men's programme because his wife accused him of stealing her curtains, which he claimed not to have done. He claimed that his daughter had stolen the curtains and that he had physically chastised her for doing so, for which he was subsequently arrested. Glen, in a number of ways throughout his narrative, also characterised himself as misunderstood and non-violent. In the extract below, Glen described his feelings about participating in the perpetrator group.

"I'm mister so and so, I'm here for abusing my wife." And then I said to myself: "Geez, but I'm not an abuser, why must I come and confess that I'm an abuser?" (Glen)

Given that Glen was determined to construct a self that was non-violent, it is understandable that he felt that he did not belong in the perpetrator group. Glen was thus resisting the characterisation of himself as an abuser.

All three women, on the other hand, depicted themselves as victimised by brutally violent partners. Gina, for example, constructed herself as the object upon which Glen acted out his abusive tendencies. She depicted herself as helpless and passive. Wilma also outlined her passivity in the face of constant fear and danger.

I was very scared of him. I was terrified of this man. (Gina)

And I built up this fear inside me, scared of him and almost, I was, because he threatens, “go and fetch the police then I’ll kill you” or “if the police get here you’ll be dead already”. (Wilma)

All three women were still living with their partners at the time of the interviews, but were ambivalent about continuing the relationship. They doubted whether their partners would change and thus felt that they should end the relationships. Gina was uncertain about the relationship but was considering a divorce. Wilma was also uncertain, as her partner recently moved back into their home (after a three-month period of separation). He had not discussed the move with her, but had moved in without her consent, and she was afraid to discuss it with him. Shanaaz, in contrast, was determined to end the relationship with her husband, but she saw no clear way out of it. She faced financial constraints, such as needing to obtain money for the divorce, and she was fearful of what he might do to her.

6.2.1.1 Dual identities

Although all three women presented their partners as severely abusive, two of them acknowledged another aspect of their identities. Gina, for instance, described how her partner was a ‘different person’ (caring and loving) when they met originally. In contrast to the ‘loving’ personas sometimes emphasised by the collaborative couples, these women suggested that the good side of their partners’ personalities were artificial and that the true (violent) self often remained invisible to others.

/.../ then he is the nice man. The people actually won't know there's problems between us. /.../ He is that type of person, he can hide a lot. And he can pretend a lot. (Wilma)

Given that the men did not fully admit to any violence, it is understandable that they did not construct any duality in their own personalities. They consistently aimed to represent themselves as 'good'. In addition, it is also notable that both Wilma and Gina (who were uncertain about their relationships) constructed some duality in their husbands' personas that might have made them ambivalent about ending the relationship. Shanaaz, however, seemed certain that she no longer wanted to remain with Shafiek, and therefore did not acknowledge that he might have been 'good' at the beginning of their relationship. In fact, Shanaaz described how, at the time, the Muslim community of which she was a member had coerced her into marrying him because they were unmarried and living together. Shanaaz denied agency on her part and suggested that the relationship was troubled or atypical from the beginning.

6.2.2 Accounting for Violence or Marital Problems

None of the men in these three couples accepted any blame or responsibility for the violence in their marital relationships, in fact, they failed to mention any violence on their part. The women, on the contrary, accounted for or described the violence in terms of the men seeking to exert and maintain control in the relationships.

6.2.2.1 The Exertion of Control

In Gina's narrative, issues related to control were made explicit. She described how her partner attempted to exert control over almost every aspect of her life. In her view, then, the abuse was enacted as a form of control.

...the thing is this he still wants to have like power over me. You understand I mustn't go here and I mustn't do this and er he can leave and just, get up in the night and then get phone calls and he's out and come back in the morning. But the minute I go to church and come back late it's always a issue. (Gina)

The other women also described the strategies their partners used to control and instil fear in them. Wilma, for example, described how Wayne used to threaten her continuously to make

her fearful. He also used to change the keys around or to lock her up in the home. Shanaaz, in comparison, described how her partner exerted financial control by first giving her money toward the household expenses and then demanding it back in order to support his drug habit. She also described physical and sexual abuse. Gina, likewise, mentioned that, as a form of control in the relationship, Glen did not allow her to have friends.

... you know he kicked another friend of mine out here from the house. Because he don't want me to have friends he want me to be here like a, you know, a jailbird, I mean be in a cage all the time. But he wants to have friends. (Gina)

In his narrative, Glen mentioned that he would not allow Gina's friendship with a particular woman to continue, and below he explained why.

She got false information that I was having an affair with somebody else. And, which was not true. These were just friends and strictly friends. And er, in fact how, what actually happened there is – listening to people. In fact the person that she was listening to, had a very serious problem in her own marriage. Now obviously you know, she was looking for a partner. /.../ And er she decided she want to come back home. Ok you want to come back home on condition. That lady doesn't set a foot here. Because she's been the biggest problem maker here and you've got to admit it, whether you like it –“ ag, but its my friend we go to church and how can we just like” – unfortunately the bible even talks about it, right. Get rid of her. So there was understanding she stopped seeing this friend and that friend stopped coming to my place and everything just turned, it just turned. (Glen)

The way in which Glen portrays the problem with Gina's friend resembles that of how he accounts for their problems in general. In his view, their problems stemmed from a lack of communication and understanding. For Glen, the privacy and primacy of marital life was disrupted when his wife 'listened to people'. This problem (like all of their marital problems) was easily resolved when he took the initiative to act upon his beliefs.

According to Gina, Glen also exerted sexual control in the relationship and, at times, after a verbal fight, expected her to be sexually intimate with him.

... it's always about our sex life too. I don't satisfy him, I don't make him happy. But the thing is this, I can't, I can't. You know I mean even having sex, there must be a passion. It you can't do it out of lust. That's why I'm very happy the way we living. You know he sleeps there and I sleep there. I'm happy because why, my heart was never there. Even when he was in the room, you know sometimes after we

have sex I will cry because I feel like somebody that's been raped. You understand you don't do it. For instance, he'll be he'll be rude to me in the bed then he still expects me to sleep with him. Then I sleep with him because I I'm fearful [Floretta: Mmm]. You understand, but then it affects me afterwards because how can you? (Gina)

Gina explained that Glen exerted pressure on her to be sexually intimate with him. He did so by indicating that she did not gratify him sexually, and thereby also attacking her lack of conformity to traditional standards of femininity. Gina sometimes acquiesced to his sexual demands out of fear of future violence. Like many abused women, Gina spoke about the pain and anguish she experienced after forced sexual contact with her partner, also likening her experiences to rape. In contrast, a discussion of sexual intimacy or sexual issues was absent from Glen's narrative except in relation to describing their communication problems.

But er ... there's times you know we don't talk and we don't sleep together and things like that. I mean those were all contributing factors ... (Glen)

Like many other men in this study, Glen viewed a lack of sexual intimacy as a significant marital problem. In a related manner, Shanaaz described how an argument resulted because she refused to be sexually intimate with her partner.

This morning we had a fight about my own body. He fights because he wants, I can't, I won't, how can I say, let him come to me because I don't want that – look now I'm healthy, I brought herbs and everything [Floretta: Mmm]. Now I'm scared if he, then I will get those things again and I don't want to run to the day hospital every time. A person also has, how can I say, you also have skin on your face [Floretta: Mmm]. Every time with, with er, how can I say with such a (disease) to the day hospital. Don't know what the people think of you. (Shanaaz)

Shanaaz had difficulty, perhaps stemming from embarrassment, in describing why she refused sexual contact with her partner. It appears that she did so in order to avoid a sexually transmitted infection (which she had already experienced). Discussions of sexual intimacy were absent from Shafiek's story. Like Gina and Shanaaz, Wilma too described episodes of coerced sex, which were absent from her partner's narrative. In these relationships, then, the women characterised their partners as exerting multiple forms of control over them, and also using violence as a form of coercion.

6.2.2.2 Communication or Relationship Problems

Glen characterised his relationship as plagued by mundane marital or relationship problems, such as a lack of understanding, communication or tolerance.

It was just a matter of understanding one another. It was a matter of being tolerant to one another. And you know learning to accept things and not to accept things and (your) likes and dislikes. [Floretta: So what kind of, kind of, in the past then what were your main problems?] It was understanding, ja it was mostly learning to understand one another, learning to trust one another. (Glen)

The language Glen employed to talk about the problems in his relationship primarily placed emphasis on issues surrounding communication (“understanding one another”, “tolerant to one another”, “likes and dislikes”, “trust”). In this manner, Glen was able to normalise the problems in his relationship with Gina by downplaying any assumption that their problems might have been serious. Shafiek constructed problems in his relationship in a similar fashion. He indicated that Shanaaz’s parents used to interfere in their relationship but that things improved when they moved away. He also spoke about problems with their children, such as the son becoming involved with gangsters in the area. These relatively mundane relationship or family problems were juxtaposed with ‘serious’ problems encountered by other couples, which would be classified as abuse.

It wasn’t serious problems like beating one another or getting drunk or something of that sort. And er you know compare my, my little petty problems to some serious cases. You know where people were given court orders, no there was no such thing in my case. In my case it was just straight forward, you know. It was just a matter of taking two heads and banging them together and say, “listen, come on, wake up and understand!” So, I’m quite comfortable the way it is now. I wouldn’t say it is, you know serious, serious, no. (Glen)

Glen seemed determined to suggest that there was no serious violence in their relationship. Glen’s language usage once again masked any impression of severity or seriousness (“little petty problems”). He also juxtaposed his situation to other ‘serious’ cases where the legal system was involved. Gina, on the contrary, spoke very differently about their relationship.

The abuse start after I fell pregnant with my son [Floretta: Mmm]. Like he used to, in (place) he hit me with a golf stick. He’s a very, man I dunno what to say. And even here down the road quite some time back

he hit me with a sjambok (whip), he hit me with a panga (machete) in (area of residence). (Gina)

Shafiek also declared that he did not fight with or verbally abuse his partner. He explained that he had only been sent to the perpetrator group because he had been accused of stealing his wife's curtains and selling them. Shanaaz, however, mentioned that he frequently stole and sold their household items in order to support his drug habit, which she characterised as a form of economic abuse. The issue of drug or alcohol abuse, although usually understood as an individual issue, should also be understood on a socio-cultural level. In many marginalized communities in South Africa (such as Mitchell's Plain, the area in which Shanaaz lives) drug and alcohol abuse is a significant issue, complicated by poverty, unemployment and crime. In addition, women face a number of additional hardships associated with a partner's alcohol or drug abuse (Boonzaier, 2001). These include the allocation of scarce economic resources to a partner's drug or alcohol habit. Addicts also commonly steal household or family items (such as clothing, appliances or anything of retail value) in order to support their habit. Furthermore, the violence may also be worsened as a consequence of men's abuse of drugs or alcohol.

Wayne admitted that he did use minor violence against his partner, such as pulling her hair. He also declared that the abuse was mostly verbal, or that, at times, he was accused of verbal abuse when he simply spoke his mind. In contrast, Wilma described the violence in the relationship as very serious. She declared that he frequently threatened to kill her, choked her on a few occasions (including in a hospital bed), and exerted other forms of control over her, such as financial and sexual.

Taken by themselves, the relationship stories of Glen, Shafiek and, to some degree, Wayne merely seem to be of couples who experienced minor relationship disagreements or communication problems that could easily be resolved. Glen employed a number of strategies in order to avoid speaking of the past. Firstly, he highlighted the present and constantly attempted to shift the conversation into the present. Consider the following extract:

Floretta: Can you please give me a bit of, er tell me a bit about your relationship with your wife or give me a bit of history on your relationship.

Glen: Present, past?

Floretta: Well you could start with the past.

Glen: Well the past was a bit rocky and er, (2) I wouldn't say rocky to that extent where it was, you

know unsolvable. And er, it was minor and petty issues.

Above, Glen's question ("Present, past?") in response to the interviewer's question immediately set the tone for how he would speak about his relationship with Gina. Generally, when one is asked to tell about a 'history', it is taken to mean the past. Glen provided us with a clue about how he will tell his narrative – a general reluctance to discuss the past, replaced with an eagerness to discuss the present instead. Glen responded to the interviewer's clarification by briefly mentioning a troubled past that was speedily overcome. His use of language such as "a bit rocky", "unsolvable" and "minor and petty" serves to persuade the listener that their problems were not serious.

Shafiek deflected attention from the seriousness of the problems in his relationship with Shanaaz in a similar manner, choosing instead to focus on the benefits of the men's programme in which he was involved and to outline his future plans. Similarly, Wayne, who admitted to 'minor' violence, told almost no stories about the relationship in the past. These men clearly structured their narratives in particular ways in order to convey their overall messages that the troubles of the past had been overcome, and to avoid speaking of the past. Their partners, however, presented very different narratives about their time together as couples. They spoke of partners who were pathologically abusive and who often felt no remorse for their actions.

6.3 Chapter Summary

On the whole, the analysis discerned two types of couples' narratives, namely collaborative and incongruent. In the former, the individuals in the dyad co-jointly produced a narrative about the events in their relationships and the 'causes' of violence as they saw it. In the latter, the inconsistencies between women and men's accounts made the 'couple's story' impossible to discern.

Collaborative couples outlined their experiences of being victims and perpetrators of violence. These categories were often blurred and changing. These couples' narratives cohered around a number of 'causes' of the violence in their relationships. They understood the violence as emerging from individual pathology as well as from dysfunctional families. At the relational level, collaborative couples narrated their understandings of mutuality and

responsibility for the violence and also attributed the violence to marital conflict. The dynamics of power and control in these relationships were also illuminated. In addition, violence was understood to result from men's consumption of alcohol. The thematic profile of collaborative couples involved an interrelated web of meanings and understandings attributed to men's violent behaviour.

Incongruent couples, by comparison, told narratives that differed in form as well as content. The themes evident in these accounts were similar across genders, rather than across partnerships. On the one hand, women constructed themselves as victims and their partners as perpetrators. They also narrated their experiences of power and control in their relationships as being exerted by the male partner alone. Men, on the other hand, outlined their experiences in terms of marital problems. These problems were presumed to stem from a lack of communication. The lack of coherence between the stories of these women and men were not resolved and therefore rendered their narratives incongruent.

The following chapter will pull the multiple analytical strands and layers of meaning together to provide a coherent story about violence, relationships and the co-construction of meaning in violent relationships. It will furthermore conclude the thesis and discuss the broader implications and significance of this study.

Chapter 7

CONCLUSION: A META-STORY OF VIOLENCE

In this project, I aimed to explore how women and men understood and made meaning of the violence in their relationships. I intended to draw attention to how socially constructed norms of femininity and masculinity were enacted in women and men's narratives. I also explored how the individuals in the dyad negotiated and constructed stories about their relationships in relation to each other. In this, the final chapter of the thesis, I briefly summarise the salient points that emerged from women and men's narratives of violence and explore the broader significance thereof. I also summarise the results of the analysis of couples' stories about violence and their relationships. The chapter ends by discussing the broader significance of the study and by making recommendations for research, policy and practice.

7.1 Women, Men and Narratives of Violence

In accordance with the literature (Adams et al., 1995; Eisikovits & Buchbinder, 1997; Hearn, 1998; Reitz, 1999), this study revealed that men utilised a variety of linguistic and rhetorical devices in order to normalise their violent behaviour and their relationships. Men also employed textual strategies in order to diminish their own culpability for the violence and to maintain positive identities. Other strategies used by men included changing the identity of the victim or perpetrator (see also Hydén, 1994) – thereby rationalizing their behaviour. On the whole, these strategies allowed these men (who may have derived poor self-esteem as a result of legal intervention and participation in perpetrator programmes) to maintain and present themselves in a positive light, or to maintain positive forms of identity in the face of evidence to the contrary. As this study revealed and as others have argued (Buchbinder & Eisikovits, 2004; Hydén, 1994), woman abuse has been transformed from a private, family or relationship issue into a social and political problem that is receiving attention from a variety of avenues (legal, social, political). In the South African context, this problem has also received a fair amount of attention from governmental and social service agencies as well as from the media. In light of all the attention accorded to this problem, a man who has been identified as violent toward his partner and who has been compelled to cede to state or legal intervention (by means of perpetrator programmes or threats of arrest) has limited options for negotiating a positive identity.

This study also found that women and men used similar forms of language to discuss the violent events in their relationships. Women referred to their husbands as 'abusive men' and to themselves as 'battered women'. In accordance with the literature (Eisikovits & Buchbinder, 1999), the women in this study too employed volcanic metaphors to construct men's violence as expressive and as a loss of control. These metaphors served the purpose of minimising men's culpability for the violence – thereby 'normalising' the situation in which women found themselves, and making it acceptable for women who continued to live with their partners. Women sometimes also minimised the extent of the violence in their relationships. For women the rationale for these constructions may be very similar to that of the men, namely, to maintain positive identities. Most women remained with abusive partners for extended periods and, in order to resist the construction of themselves as psychologically damaged, they employed these justificatory strategies. In so doing, they also avoided being judged by others.

The meanings that women and men attached to violence were derived from the existing psychological, educational, legal and social definitions of 'domestic violence' or 'woman abuse' within the South African context, as well as from the media, social agencies, governmental organisations and individuals' own understandings thereof. Women and men did occasionally hold different perceptions of the violence in their relationships. Like the participants in Bograd's (1988) study, women more frequently described incidents as violent than did their partners, and they also held different perceptions about what constituted violence. However, both men and women understood the man's behaviour as deriving from factors that reduced his capacity for self-control, such as alcohol or drug induced states, as well as from a loss of control or external stressors (Bograd, 1988). In this study, the man's violence was largely understood and explained in psychological terms. As Palmay (1999) argued, the language of psychology is pervasive in society, and the fact that woman abuse is frequently explained at the individual level makes it more amenable to psychological explanations as a problem of the self.

Women's and men's talk about violence and relationships highlighted the fact that gender is a relational concept constructed at particular intrapsychic, interpersonal, social and historical moments. The men in this study strove to attain hegemonic masculinity as the ideal. Frequently, violence was thus employed as an intentional means to exert authority and

dominance in their relationships. Violence was utilised in the context of women's increasing power or dominance in their relationships and of men's purported feelings of powerlessness. In the face of high levels of unemployment in South Africa and in the context of poverty and marginalization, which was characteristic of the lives of the research participants, discourses of powerlessness and emasculation provided a socially acceptable means by which to understand the 'causes' of men's violence against women. Although issues relating to individual psychology (internalised feelings of powerlessness or a lack of impulse control) may be important to understanding this dynamic, broader socio-structural factors may also affect men's sense of themselves as well as their gendered relationships and may be just as important.

In this investigation, then, men's notions of 'successful' masculinity were embedded in cultural practices of patriarchy and male dominance. For the men in this study, the attainment of successful masculinity was difficult if they were not the primary breadwinners and could not maintain financial control in their relationships. As a result, the attainment of successful masculinity was put forward as the ideal but was also contrasted with the powerlessness men reportedly experienced as a result of social marginalization (poverty, unemployment etc.). As hooks (1994) argued:

Black males, utterly disenfranchised in almost every arena of life in the United States, often find that the assertion of sexist domination is their only expressive access to the patriarchal power they are told all men should possess as their gendered birthright
(p. 110)

During apartheid, the racial category 'coloured' was also gendered in a number of ways (Salo, 2003). Apartheid housing and welfare policies "located adult coloured women in unique relation to the apartheid bureaucracy" (Salo, 2003, p. 349). Salo (2003) argued that 'colouredness' was gendered in two primary ways. Firstly, through assuming that the two-parent, nuclear family was the norm, Apartheid policies ensured that only these families (husband, wife and children) were provided with public housing, and that only women (as mothers) received a child support grant. Secondly, local labour practices ensured the feminisation of the industrial labour force in the Western Cape economy (West, 1984 cited in Salo, 2003). The textile industry, which was the lifeblood of the local economy, thus relied on coloured women as a cheap source of labour. Through these practices, coloured women

were to some degree advantaged over coloured men who had to compete in the broader labour economy (within the context of racial oppression). At the same time, however, cultural patriarchal norms were also prevalent and subordinated coloured women to men. These complex and ambiguous relationships had a variety of implications for gendered subjectivities for men and women. Salo (2003) showed how, in a coloured community in the Western Cape, men negotiated masculinity through practices relating to the formation and maintenance of gangs and violence. In these contexts, masculinity has been associated with violence and domination over women.

Some authors have argued that men who are marginalized and live in poverty have difficulty in attaining cultural standards of masculinity (Bourgois, 1995; Weis et al., 2002). As a result, men may perceive challenges to their masculine identities and develop a crisis in their gendered subjectivities – these feelings of powerlessness and insecurity may be translated into emasculation (Simpson, 1992). In such situations, women become the targets of the man's attempt to reassert his masculine identity. Moore (1994) used poststructuralist theories of subjectivity in order to theorise the relationship between interpersonal violence, gender and sexuality. She argued that individuals choose to take up various subject positions and that these positions are linked to fantasies of identity (ideas about the type of person one would like to be) and to fantasies of power and agency (which are linked to material, social and economic contexts). Moore (1994) further argued that men use violence as a result of 'thwarted' gender identities, which may result from the contradictions of various positions, the pressure to conform to certain subject positions and the failure of others to take up their 'proper' subject positions *vis-à-vis* oneself. She argued that men resolve a crisis in their gendered identities by using violence against their partners. This study showed that: "The relationship of men to hegemonic masculinity is often fraught, the enactment partial, contested and capable of shifting into violence" (Connell, 2002, p. 94).

This study revealed that, despite ambiguous and contradictory gendered subjectivities, women and men monitored and policed their partners' conformity to ideals of traditional femininity or masculinity. Men thus policed women's conformity to femininity by expecting that they adhere to the roles of a 'good woman or wife'. This implied that women remain submissive to their partners and perform certain duties such as being sexually available. Women, conversely, alluded to expectations that their partners be the primary breadwinners who should be responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the family. These proscriptions

were particularly salient in situations of extreme economic deprivation and where the husband was unemployed and the family economically deprived. In addition, women's narratives of their relationships were peppered with discourses of love and romance (Towns & Adams, 2000; Jackson, 2001), which script particular feminine roles for women and masculine roles for men. Morrell (2001) argued that masculinities are not constructed exclusively by men but that women either sanction or reject certain forms or aspects of masculinity. The same could apply to the multiple forms and discourses of femininity. This study thus highlighted the relational and communal construction of gender.

The narrative analysis revealed that, for some women, positive forms of identity involved the appropriation of the 'femininity' narrative – being passive, accepting blame and denying or minimising a partner's violence. In contrast, other women refashioned this script by presenting themselves as strong, capable and independent – thereby deriving a positive form of identity. The latter construction could be contrasted to the former as an active, feminist form of femininity, whereby women come to view themselves as survivors of abuse and derive a positive self-esteem from their coping experiences. Certain women told narratives that resisted the dominant feminine cultural script – and its associated discourses (e.g. romantic narrative). Women also resisted the enforcement of male hegemony by employing a variety of available resources in order to end the violence in their lives. These included the use of personal resources or strategies, or obtaining legal intervention, or social support or assistance. In sum, the adoption of femininity is, at times, shaky, unstable, contradictory and partial, and women struggle to negotiate, resist and situate themselves in relation to a multiplicity of 'feminine' subjectivities (Macdonald, 1995; Walkerdine, 1997).

7.2 *Couples' Stories about Violence*

A central aim of this study was to identify how the individuals in the dyad worked together to construct a coherent story about their relationships. Relationships were therefore analysed on another level of interpretation – the inter-relational sphere. The narrative interviewing and analytical methods employed in this study revealed that violent relationships are disorganised and conflictual and the individuals in the partnership attempt to create order through their retrospective telling of the relationship. Couples' narratives involved speaking of the past (the beginning of their relationships, entering into marriage); raising concerns about the present (current struggles, problems, challenges); as well as presenting hopes and desires for the

future of the unit (concerns about continued life together as a couple or establishing a new identity as a single individual). As Hydén (1994) argued, narratives have both retrospective and prospective dimensions in that individuals attempt to make sense of the past, but also to express concerns and desires for the future. In general, two types of couple stories emerged in this study. Within the context of the research interviews, individuals either told collaborative stories or incongruent narratives in order to make meaning of their lives together as a couple.

7.2.1 Collaborative Narratives

Men and women partners who told collaborative stories frequently covered the same events and, at times, employed very similar language. Although there were differences in these accounts, they did not disrupt an overall, coherent story about the relationship (Fiese & Sameroff, 1999). A distinct form or structure of the narratives could be discerned, although there were occasionally differences between the stories told by the individuals in the dyad. In general, both partners told narratives of decline (regressive narratives) in their relationships as a result of the violence. These ‘types’ of narratives were more common in couples whose “joint marital project” (Hydén, 1994, p. 29) had ceased (through divorce or separation). Other couples chose to represent the relationship with stability narratives (although these were mostly evaluated by both partners as negative). These couples described the relationships as essentially unchanged since the beginning and tainted by violence and the associated negative consequences. Couples’ narrative forms, then, provided a coherent rationalisation for why their relationships had ended, or for why they were involved in intervention programmes. At the macro level, individual partners’ narratives about their relationships were highly congruent, although they did sometimes contain different forms of micro narratives (episodes, stories, habitual or hypothetical narratives), which were employed to achieve particular aims.

Collaborative stories were characterised by a degree of similarity in how women and men characterised themselves and their partners. Women retrospectively revealed that they almost fully subscribed to a victim-role (passive and submissive), especially at the beginning of their relationships. Their partners very often concurred with these constructions and, in a related manner, constructed themselves as strong, masculine and as the ‘protectors’. However, once the relationship had been contaminated by violence (and associated interventions, e.g. police, social agencies), these roles shifted, along with perceptions of who held power in the

relationship. The abusive men were henceforth labelled negatively as ‘perpetrators’. Women constructed their partners as violent and abusive. Nonetheless, the division between the ‘victims’ and the ‘perpetrators’ were also blurred, as both partners sometimes occupied different positions at varying times in the relationship and for a variety of purposes. Women’s roles were also constructed as fluid and changing – e.g. from victim to survivor; dependent to independent; weak to strong. These shifting constructions had implications for men’s sense of self, as well as for their sense of power and control in their relationships. Given that violent relationships are usually characterised by a traditional pattern of submission and authoritarianism (Hydén, 1994), women’s appropriation of the ‘powerful’ role would cast the man in the role of the powerless victim. This inversion was prominent in some men’s narratives, with some women concurring that their partners may have experienced powerlessness and a lack of control over their own lives. The analysis showed that one type of relationship pattern emerged from these types of stories, namely, a dominant-submissive pattern. Although these positions were not static, violence emerged as a struggle to maintain male dominance and female submission – the traditional relationship pattern.

In another group of couples who also told collaborative narratives, both partners constructed themselves and the other as strong, independent and active. In these relationships, violence seemed to emerge as a result of a ‘struggle’ for power and control between the partners. Thus, it could be argued that a second relational pattern (dominance-dominance) characterises some abusive relationships. It seems reasonable to postulate that the fact that the relationship did not conform to the ‘expected’ pattern of male domination and female submission, an emergent power struggle resulted in order to achieve equilibrium. If the power struggle was not resolved, the couple either accepted a new way of ‘being’ or decided to separate. New relationships, if they were embarked upon, might then possibly conform to the individual’s expected relational pattern (either male dominant or equalitarian).

Some couples who told collaborative stories also referred to the repeated cyclical pattern of love and abuse (a cycle of violence) (Walker, 1979; 1984; 2000). However, the characteristics of the ‘loving’ phase were different for the individual couples. Some women described affectionate emotions toward their partners while others simply mentioned a pattern of leaving and returning without the suggestion of love or affection. For some men the loving phase was characterised by sexual intimacy and closeness. In a subtle manner, women concurred with these constructions, although discussions of sexual intimacy were rare.

Congruent with the notion of love and abuse co-existing in the same relationship, both women and men co-constructed some duality in the abuser's persona (loving and abusive). As Yassour Borochowitz and Eisikovits (2002) pointed out, women and men in violent relationships often expressed similar understandings about the connection between love and abuse in their relationships.

Couples who employed a collaborative narrative style co-jointly produced a narrative about the 'causes' of the violence, as they saw it. They employed a similar rhetoric to account for why their relationships became violent in the first place. In some relationships, violence was represented as the outcome of an interaction between partners where one partner employed a number of strategies to provoke the other, and where the other partner, because he had no realistic alternatives, reacted with violence. This pattern of interacting was represented in a systematic manner in which both partners accepted some joint responsibility for the final outcome, namely violence. This pattern was also characteristic of a form of expressive violence where the man experienced a 'loss of control' and could therefore not be held fully responsible for his actions. Other ways in which the man was held to be not fully culpable, was through the emphasis on the role of alcohol in the violence and through the 'psychologisation' of the problem. Men were thus constructed as 'damaged individuals' who sometimes originated from dysfunctional families. A third pattern of relating appeared to emerge from the above – a pattern of negative reciprocity where both partners were perceived as being accountable for the violence as a result of not being able to resolve their marital conflict adequately.

To a large degree, men's violence was constructed as expressive, volcanic, explosive and beyond the perpetrator's control. However, this violence had a dual function and was also represented as an instrumental means of exerting authority, power or control in the relationship. In these situations, the woman's increasing power and the man's sense of powerlessness (resulting from relationship dynamics but also from structural and social issues) becomes central. As discussed earlier, theorists have argued that in a socio-cultural context characterised by structural inequality, marginalisation and deprivation, and where men are unable to be 'successfully' masculine, they may use violence as a means to reassert a gendered identity in crisis (Moore, 1994; Simpson, 1992).

This study showed that violence could be represented as situated between the extremes of intentionality (instrumental violence) and spontaneity (expressive violence), and seemed to emerge as a consequence of either power or powerlessness. Yet, these positions were not static. Representations along these dimensions of violence were multiple and contradictory. Constructions of powerlessness may indeed provide a rhetoric of mitigation for men's violence (by men and women). Yet, issues of structural and social oppression are important and clearly filter into how men and women relate to each other on an intimate level. As Hydén (1994) argued:

... a husband's use of violence toward his wife and the way she reacts to it produces a social order, and as well reflects an already existing social order in the surrounding society (p. 159).

7.2.2 *Incongruent Narratives*

The incongruent couple's narrative style involved major disagreements or conflicts in the ways in which men and women told their stories and accounted for the violence in their relationships. There were also marked differences in the content of their stories. As a result, it was difficult, and sometimes even impossible, to discern the 'couple's story'. The forms and structures of individuals' narratives were also very different. In general, women's narratives contained a negative evaluative component (regressive or negative stability narratives). Men, because they rarely described any violence, often told narratives outlining periods of regression, but with their narratives remaining positive or progressive as a whole (reflecting the positive evaluation they accorded to their relationships as a whole).

These individuals told conflicting stories about their lives together as a couple. In general, the men attempted, at all costs, to present themselves as non-violent and with a positive identity (despite or perhaps even because of their involvement in perpetrator programmes). It was interesting to note that references to, and talk about their partners were scarce and almost absent from these men's narratives. In stark contrast, women depicted themselves as fearful victims, violated by a brutally violent and remorseless partner, and one who remained at the forefront of their narratives. Women depicted the relationships as characterised by a distinct pattern of submission (woman) and domination (man). In these relationships, this pattern was characterised as static – as women seldom had the resources or the protection to struggle for

power or control. Men, conversely, attempted to characterise their relationships as non-violent and outlined issues such as relationship and communication problems – thereby constructing the minimal violence they claimed to have perpetrated as a departure from the norm. In contrast, women portrayed men's violence as an exertion or expression of male power and control. These women thus described how men exerted multiple forms of control through economic, physical, psychological and sexual abuse.

Incongruent narratives involved the presentation of contrasting and contradictory stories about women and men's lives together as a couple. A dominant-submissive relational pattern seemed to characterise these couples' relationships. The inconsistencies in their stories were not easily resolved as each partner was deeply invested in their choice of narrative representation. Men were invested in their narrative representations in order to downplay any serious violations and to emphasise positive forms of identity, whereas women were invested in portraying the seriousness and abusive nature of their relationships. On the whole, however, a holistic analysis of the narratives of these three men did reveal that they were deeply inconsistent, contradictory and ambiguous. There did not seem to be a clear theme holding their stories together and rarely did they tell of specific incidents in their pasts. Their individual stories were difficult to discern – and this may have contributed to the disruption of the couples' stories as a whole.

How does the listener, reader or analyst solve the disparities within these couples' narratives? Should these necessarily be resolved? Using Gina and Glen (see Chapter Six) as an example, one may be inclined to assume that, because Gina's narrative was lengthier and contained more contextual details, that she was telling the 'Truth' about the relationship. Although it may be more difficult to empathise with Glen's point of view (after listening to Gina's narrative), it may also be possible that Glen was unwilling to replay the past and that *he* was telling the 'Truth' about their relationship. Narrative studies are, however, not conducted in order to access some form of pre-existing and unquestionable 'Truth' about people's lives. The aim is to understand how people attach meaning to and construct stories about their experiences within particular social, historical, economic and cultural contexts. From this perspective then, the stories of these couples provide us with a wealth of interpretive details about how each partner may construct narratives about relationships and violence (regardless of the 'truth' about the relationship). Furthermore, how men and women talk about the relationship is likely to shift too, as 'the relationship' is not a singular and fixed entity that

remains unchanged over time. It is fluid and dynamic, and it is also constructed in this manner. Incongruent narratives were thus characterised by a lack of symmetry in how the partners spoke about and constructed the events in their relationships. These inconsistencies were not resolved within the narratives but the analysis showed that, for a variety of different reasons, each partner was invested in their particular ways of telling of their relationships.

In summary, this study of couples' narratives revealed two types of stories about relationships and violence, namely collaborative and incongruent narratives. Within these types of stories, three relationship patterns could be detected. There were the traditional dominance-submission pattern, a struggle for dominance-dominance, and a pattern of negative reciprocity. Each relationship was not necessarily characterised by only one way of relating. For example, a pattern of dominance-dominance could also be accompanied by a pattern of negative reciprocity in which both partners were struggling for dominance in the relationship and had no adequate means to resolve conflict, which then resulted in violence. Little is known about how individuals in a violent relationship relate to each other on an interpersonal level, and it is on this level that this study sought to provide some new insights. In addition, the distinction between the collaborative and incongruent couples might also grant some insight into the potential for positive change in these relationships. Essentially, communication (or a lack thereof) is an important factor in violent relationships. If the man or woman partner is not empathic to or aware of the other's point of view, the problem might be such that there is no potential for positive change in these relationships (incongruent narratives). However, if there are similarities and symmetries in how the individuals in the couple understand and construct stories about their relationship, there may be greater potential for positive change. This finding also has implications for the treatment of perpetrators or interventions for couples. Marital or co-joint therapy or counselling is usually contra-indicated in violent relationships. However, with these distinctions between different types of 'violent couples', particular forms of co-joint intervention could be developed for couples where there is some potential for change.

7.3 *Theoretical and Methodological Implications*

This study revealed that woman abuse should be studied by taking account of individual, interpersonal, sociological and socio-cultural factors. Some theorists have argued for an ecological model as a basis for understanding woman abuse (Heise, 1998; Heise & Garcia-

Moreno, 2002). This model emphasises the interplay between individual, situational or interpersonal and socio-cultural factors. However, the multiplicity of intersecting factors is complex and dynamic. The issue of relationship power, for instance, provides a key example of the theoretical argument emerging from this study. According to an ecological model, relationship power could be placed at the interpersonal level. At this level, it could be either the man or the woman who 'holds the power' in the relationship. However, whether the man or the woman holds power depends upon the broader socio-cultural context in which gendered relationships are situated (in other words, the patriarchal context). In addition, despite the endemic nature of patriarchy, there are also widespread economic and structural forces ensuring that the local operation of patriarchy is not as simplistic as male domination and female submission. Furthermore, power is not a static issue and, as this study has shown, shifts in power at the relational level may be accompanied by changes at the personal, social or economic levels as well. An ecological model is useful for thinking about the multiplicity of influences on men's violence. Nonetheless, this study showed that feminist poststructuralism offered a broader, dynamic understanding of woman abuse.

Feminist poststructuralism accords attention to language, meaning and subjectivity, thereby offering a dynamic and fluid understanding of individual experience. While allowing for the acknowledgement of a multiplicity of factors that may influence men's perpetration and women's experiences of woman abuse, a feminist poststructuralist framework also ensured that attention was accorded to language and subjectivity. The study showed how the language employed by women and men herein constructed various forms of subjectivity and a multiplicity of subject positions that could be either affirmed or resisted. These subject positions were filtered through dynamic social, historical and cultural moments. The theoretical framework also allowed for the recognition that subjectivity could be contradictory and ambiguous. At particular moments, women in this study were able to construct themselves as victimised by a dominant man partner. At other times, the same women were able to acknowledge their own agency and to draw on discourses of power and resistance. Similarly, the men in the study were able to admit to their control and domination in their relationships, but they were also able to construct themselves as powerless. Feminist poststructuralist theory illuminates new possibilities for theorising about woman abuse, which acknowledge multiplicity and variability in women and men's experiences.

The value of feminist poststructuralist theorising is that it allows us to acknowledge and even embrace contradiction, multiplicity and inconsistency. Gavey (1996) argued that relationship power is not unidirectional and static and that our scholastic endeavours should afford us a stance that allows for competing discourses of gender and subjectivity. In this study, the approach has enabled us to acknowledge that the categories of 'victim' and 'perpetrator' were neither static nor clearly distinguishable. The value of feminist poststructuralism is that ambiguity and contradiction are acknowledged, and that it posits a 'subject' that is multiple, contradictory and fragmented (Gavey, 1989). Women and men may thus identify with, and conform to traditional constructions of femininity and masculinity, or they may resist or challenge these. However, expressed conformity to particular ideals may also be inconsistent with hidden desires (Gavey, 1989). Gavey (1989) offered a succinct argument for the value of poststructuralism to feminist scholarship and theorising:

What feminist poststructuralism offers us is a theoretical basis for analysing the subjectivities of women and men in relation to language, other cultural practices, and the material conditions of our lives. It embraces complexity and contradiction and, I would suggest, surpasses theories that offer single-cause deterministic explanations of patriarchy and gender relations (p. 472).

This study followed an emergent tradition of qualitative methodology. Firstly, it demonstrated that a qualitative, narrative investigation of women and men's experiences provided important in-depth and contextual insights that could not have been obtained in a quantitative study. A narrative approach thus offered a dynamic account of how individuals understood and constructed their experiences within fluid historical, social, cultural and economic contexts. Secondly, recognising the importance of collecting the stories of *both* partners in a violent relationship necessitated the negotiation of particularly challenging sampling, recruitment and ethical procedures in order to access both individuals in the dyad. These procedures involved a heightened awareness of ethical issues to ensure that the recruitment and interviewing procedures did not result in any harm toward the research participants. Finally, the study also contributed to the methodological conversation by offering a practical analytical procedure for analysing the co-construction of dyadic narratives. This procedure involved within and across-case analytic methods, as well as according attention to narrative content and structure.

7.4 *Recommendations for Research and Practice*

The results of this investigation highlight the importance of considering the couple in research on woman abuse. Thus far, researchers have for the most part not explored the relationship dynamics involved in couples where a man has perpetrated violence toward his partner. Rather than focussing on either the violent or the violated individuals, researchers should explore the 'violent couple' in the broader interpersonal, social, cultural and historical context. This paves the way to acknowledging that woman abuse is not an individual problem but that it stems from a multiplicity of interrelated factors.

The patterns of relating found in this study also provide important insights into how men and women in violent relationships interact. Future research would benefit from an explicit focus on the types of relational patterns that characterise abusive relationships, in order to unravel the dynamics at play. Another important avenue for future research would be to explore whether the narrative types and relationship patterns found in this study are also present in non-violent couples. An investigation of the differences between couples where men are violent and those where there is no violence would illuminate the inter-relational and contextual factors that may maintain and contribute to the problem of woman abuse.

The historical, socio-political and economic details of South African society offer an optimal context for research and theoretical development on woman abuse. However, more local research should be encouraged, as there is still a limited base of empirical knowledge. In order to ensure that both abused women and the perpetrators of abuse are provided with adequate services, further research is essential. Priority research areas should focus on obtaining more data on the incidence of woman abuse (particularly on the influence of race, class, geographical location etc). Studies on social and demographic factors and their interaction with prevalent forms of masculinity may provide more information on how the problem might be addressed. Other research areas include the links between woman abuse, poverty, unemployment, and alcohol abuse. It is imperative that research endeavours take the distinctive South African situation into consideration when theorising about woman abuse in this country. As this study revealed, it is through this context that the actors filter their meanings and experiences of violence in their intimate relationships.

Research on couples can inform marital therapy intervention or couple counselling to combat woman abuse. Although couple counselling has been contra-indicated in couples where men had been violent, more research on this issue might change the ethos of woman abuse intervention. For example, using co-joint therapy might be appropriate for some couples. Other forms of intervention (e.g. groups for abused women or violent men) deal with the problem at the psychological and socio-cultural levels by mostly using psycho-educational models. A focus on the inter-relational sphere should not necessarily imply that the man is not responsible for his violent behaviour, or that the woman is to blame for her partner's violence. However, involving both partners in treatment does pose a set of unique challenges. It might be possible, for example, to court-mandate violent men to attend treatment programmes, but if the woman partner refuses to comply it could undermine such treatment initiatives. Another important question is raised, particularly in the South African situation. In a context where resources are already scarce, where should the priority lie, i.e. services for women victims or for men perpetrators of violence?

The suggestion that a certain kind of couple or individual may benefit from an inter-relational approach to intervention is, moreover, an important critique of current intervention models in general. These models are usually generic and are based upon an assumption of homogeneity amongst both victims and perpetrators of woman abuse. A central outcome of this study is the realisation that not all victims, perpetrators or violent relationships are homogenous, which calls into question the utility of generic interventions. The findings of this study highlight the fact that an individual approach is not adequate, as individuals do after all exist within dynamic interpersonal and socio-cultural contexts. Alternative models, such as a narrative therapeutic approach may be better able to account for diversity amongst perpetrators, victims and couples, by according attention to individuals' life stories, placed within their broader contexts (Freedman & Combs, 1996).

7.5 Study Limitations and Conclusion

A limitation of this study is that it sought to assess how women and men partners co-constructed stories of their relationships by means of individual, separate interviews. Co-joint interviews might have provided rich, contextual data relating to narrative interaction and the co-construction of individuals' stories. The ethical dilemmas involved would have been too challenging, however. As a result of a co-joint interview procedure, women might have been

subjected to further violence. In a potentially explosive, highly emotive and sensitive situation, the interviewer would need to be equipped with particular therapeutic or clinical skills, which I did not possess.

A further limitation of this investigation is the sampling procedures that were employed. The selective sampling of men who had been recruited into perpetrator programmes led to the particular interpretations contained in this study. Men who had not been identified as abusers (through participation in social, educational or legal intervention) might have provided different insights into the problem of abuse, and the varying dynamics at the couple level. The particular insights obtained from the couples in this study therefore represent those of couples who might have been in some form of crisis and were therefore the 'subjects' of particular forms of intervention. Furthermore, the sample consisted only of coloured couples and therefore cannot be generalised to all South African couples, given the particular contextual and socio-political history of the Western Cape region.

Despite the limitations outlined above, this study showed that the problem of a man's violence toward an intimate woman partner is very well understood through a dynamic and fluid lens, offered by feminist poststructuralism. The study also revealed that a narrative research and analytical approach to women and men's stories of their relationships allowed for greater sensitivity to both the homogeneity and heterogeneity present in victims', perpetrators' and couples' narratives of abuse.

This study advanced knowledge on woman abuse through the revelation that women and men's meanings of violence were grounded in their individual, inter-relational, social and cultural experiences. Individuals drew on cultural resources of gender, subjectivity, violence and relationships in order to render their experiences coherent to themselves and to others. Furthermore, the study revealed two types of relational stories that emerged from couples' narratives, namely collaborative and incongruent narratives. These types of couple narratives offered insight into the potential for interventions with women victims and men perpetrators of woman abuse. The results of this investigation also revealed interesting possibilities for future research about woman abuse.

REFERENCE LIST

Abraham, M. (2000). *Speaking the unspeakable. Marital violence among South Asian immigrants in the United States*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Abrahams, N. (2002). *Men's use of violence against intimate partners: A study of working men in Cape Town*. Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Cape Town, Cape Town.

Abrahams, N., Jewkes, R., Hoffman, M., & Laubsher, R. (2004). Sexual violence against intimate partners in Cape Town: prevalence and risk factors reported by men. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, 82(5), 330-337.

Adams, D. (1990). Treatment models of men who batter. A profeminist analysis. In K. Yllö & M. Bograd (Eds.), *Feminist perspectives on wife abuse* (pp. 176-199). Newbury Park: Sage.

Adams, P. J., Towns, A., & Gavey, N. (1995). Dominance and entitlement: the rhetoric men use to discuss their violence towards women. *Discourse & Society*, 6(3), 387-406.

American Psychiatric Association. (1994). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (Fourth ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association.

Anderson, K. L., & Umberson, D. (2001). Gendering violence: Masculinity and power in men's accounts of domestic violence. *Gender & Society*, 15(3), 358-380.

Andrews, M., Day Sclater, S., Rustin, M., Squire, C., & Treacher, A. (2000). Introduction. In M. Andrews & S. Day Sclater & C. Squire & A. Treacher (Eds.), *Lines of narrative. Psychosocial perspectives*. (pp. 1-10). London: Routledge.

Angless, T., & Maconachie, M. (1996). Battered women: problems and proposals. In L. E. Glanz & A. D. Spiegel (Eds.), *Violence & family life in contemporary South Africa: research and policy issues*. (pp. 151-166). Pretoria: HSRC Publishers.

Ashworth, P. (2003). The origins of qualitative psychology. In J. A. Smith (Ed.), *Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to research methods* (pp. 4-24). London: Sage.

Astin, M. C., Lawrence, K. J., & Foy, D. W. (1993). Posttraumatic stress disorder among battered women: Risk and resiliency factors. *Violence and Victims*, 8(1), 17-28.

Ayres, L., Kavanaugh, K., & Knafl, K. A. (2003). Within-case and across-case approaches to qualitative data analysis. *Qualitative Health Research*, 13(6), 871-883.

Babcock, J., Waltz, J., Jacobson, N. S., & Gottman, J. M. (1993). Power and violence: The relation between communication patterns, power discrepancies, and domestic violence. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 61(1), 40-50.

Babcock, J. C., Jacobson, N. S., Gottman, J. M., & Yerington, T. P. (2000). Attachment, emotional regulation, and the function of marital violence: Differences between secure, preoccupied, and dismissing violent and nonviolent husbands. *Journal of Family Violence*, 15(4), 391-409.

Bacchus, L., Mezey, G., & Bewley, S. (2004). Domestic violence: prevalence in pregnant women and associations with physical and psychological health. *European Journal of Obstetrics & Gynecology and Reproductive Biology*, 113(1), 6-11.

Baker, P. L. (1997). And I went back: Battered women's negotiation of choice. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 26(1), 55-74.

Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.

Banister, P., Burman, E., Parker, I., Taylor, M., & Tindall, C. (1994). *Qualitative methods in psychology. A research guide*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Basile, K. C. (1999). Rape by acquiescence: the ways in which women "give in" to unwanted sex with their husbands. *Violence Against Women*, 5(9), 1036-1058.

Bennett, L. W. (1995). Substance abuse and the domestic assault of women. *Social Work*, 40(6), 760-771.

Bennett, L. W., Tolman, R. M., Rogalski, C. J., & Srinivasaraghavan, J. (1994). Domestic abuse by male alcohol and drug addicts. *Violence and Victims*, 9(4), 359-367.

Bevan, E., & Higgins, D. J. (2002). Is domestic violence learned? The contribution of five forms of child maltreatment to men's violence and adjustment. *Journal of Family Violence*, 17(3), 223-245.

Bhavnani, K. (1993). Talking racism and the editing of women's studies. In D. Richardson & V. Robinson (Eds.), *Thinking feminist. Key concepts in women's studies* (pp. 27-48). New York: The Guilford Press.

Blackburn, R., & Coid, J. W. (1998). Psychopathy and the dimensions of personality disorder in violent offenders. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 25(1), 129-145.

Bograd, M. (1988). How battered women and abusive men account for domestic violence: excuses, justifications, or explanations? In G. T. Hotaling & D. Finkelhor & J. T. Kirkpatrick & M. A. Straus (Eds.), *Coping with family violence: Research and policy perspectives* (pp. 60-77). Newbury Park: Sage.

Bograd, M. (1990). Feminist perspectives on wife abuse: An introduction. In K. Yllö & M. Bograd (Eds.), *Feminist perspectives on wife abuse*. (pp. 11-26). Newbury Park: Sage.

✓Bograd, M. (1999). Strengthening domestic violence theories: intersections of race, class, sexual orientation, and gender. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 25(3), 275-289.

Bollen, S., Artz, L., Vetten, L., & Louw, A. (1999). *Violence against women in metropolitan South Africa: A study on impact and service delivery*. Institute for Security Studies monograph series, No. 41. Retrieved September 28, 2000, from the World Wide Web: <http://www.iss.co.za/Publications/Monographindex.html#1999>

Boonzaier, F. (2001). *Woman abuse: Exploring women's narratives of violence and resistance in Mitchell's Plain*. Unpublished Masters thesis, University of Cape Town, Cape Town.

Boonzaier, F., & de la Rey, C. (2003). "He's a man and I'm a woman." Cultural constructions of masculinity and femininity in South African women's narratives of violence. *Violence Against Women*, 9(8), 1003-1029.

Bourgois, P. (1995). *In search of respect: Selling crack in El Barrio*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bruner, J. (1990). *Acts of meaning*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Buchbinder, E., & Eisikovits, Z. (2004). Between normality and deviance. The breakdown of batterers' identity following police intervention. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 19(4), 443-467.

Burr, V. (1998). *Gender and social psychology*. London: Routledge.

Caetano, R., & Cunradi, C. (2003). Intimate partner violence and depression among Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics. *Annals of Epidemiology*, 13(10), 661-665.

Caetano, R., Cunradi, C. B., Clark, C. L., & Schafer, J. (2000). Intimate partner violence and drinking patterns among white, black, and hispanic couples in the U.S. *Journal of Substance Abuse*, 11(2), 123-138.

Cascardi, M., O'Leary, K. D., Lawrence, E. E., & Schlee, K. A. (1995). Characteristics of women physically abused by their spouses and who seek treatment regarding marital conflict. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 63(4), 616-623.

Cascardi, M., O'Leary, K. D., & Schlee, K. A. (1999). Co-occurrence and correlates of posttraumatic stress disorder and major depression in physically abused women. *Journal of Family Violence*, 14(3), 227-249.

Cavanagh, K., Dobash, R. E., Dobash, R. P., & Lewis, R. (2001). 'Remedial work': men's strategic responses to their violence against intimate female partners. *Sociology*, 35(3), 695-714.

Chodorow, N. J. (1994). *Femininities, masculinities, sexualities. Freud and beyond*. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky.

Clements, C. M., Sabourin, C. M., & Spiby, L. (2004). Dysphoria and hopelessness following battering: The role of perceived control, coping and self-esteem. *Journal of Family Violence*, 19(1), 25-36.

Coid, J., Petruckevitch, A., Feder, G., Chung, W., Richardson, J., & Moorey, S. (2001). Relation between childhood sexual and physical abuse and risk of revictimisation in women: a cross-sectional survey. *Lancet*, 358(9280), 450-454.

✓ Connell, R. W. (1987). *Gender and power: society, the person and sexual politics*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Connell, R. W. (1995). *Masculinities*. St Leonards, Australia: Allen & Unwin.

Connell, R. W. (2002). On hegemonic masculinity and violence: Response to Jefferson and Hall. *Theoretical Criminology*, 6(1), 89-99.

Coolidge, F. L., & Anderson, L. W. (2002). Personality profiles of women in multiple abusive relationships. *Journal of Family Violence*, 17(2), 117-131.

Crawford, M. (1995). *Talking difference. On gender and language*. London: Sage.

Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design. Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Cunradi, C. B., Caetano, R., Clark, C., & Schafer, J. (2000). Neighborhood poverty as a predictor of intimate partner violence among white, black, and Hispanic couples in the United States: A multilevel analysis. *Annals of Epidemiology*, 10(5), 297-308.

Cunradi, C. B., Caetano, R., & Schafer, J. (2002). Socioeconomic predictors of intimate partner violence among White, Black, and Hispanic couples in the United States. *Journal of Family Violence*, 17(4), 377-289.

Dangor, Z., Hoff, L. A., & Scott, R. (1996). *Woman abuse in South Africa: an exploratory study*. Johannesburg: Nisaa Institute for Women's Development.

Dawes, A., de Sas Kropiwnicki, Z., Kafaar, Z., & Richter, L. (2004). *Partner violence: A South African Survey*. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council.

de la Rey, C. (1997). South African feminism, race and racism. *Agenda*, 32, 6-10.

de la Rey, C. (1999). *Career narratives of women professors in South Africa*. Unpublished Doctoral thesis, University of Cape Town, Cape Town.

✓ Denzin, N. K. (1998). The art and politics of interpretation. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials* (pp. 313-371). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1998). Introduction: entering the field of qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials* (pp. 1-34). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Department of Health, & Medical Research Council. (1998). *South African Demographic Health Survey 1998. Preliminary report*. Pretoria: Department of Health and Medical Research Council.

DeVault, M. L. (1999). *Liberating method. Feminism and social research*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Diaz-Olavarrieta, C., Ellertson, C., Paz, F., Ponce de Leon, S., & Alarcon-Segovia, D. (2002). Prevalence of battering among 1780 outpatients at an internal medicine institution in Mexico. *Social Science & Medicine*, 55, 1589-1602.

Dixon, L., & Browne, K. (2003). The heterogeneity of spouse abuse: a review. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 8(2003), 107-130.

Dobash, R. E., & Dobash, R. (1979). *Violence against wives. A case against patriarchy*. New York: The Free Press.

Dobash, R. E., & Dobash, R. P. (1998). Violent men and violent contexts. In R. E. Dobash & R. P. Dobash (Eds.), *Rethinking violence against women*. (pp. 141-168). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Dobash, R. E., Dobash, R. P., Cavanagh, K., & Lewis, R. (2000). *Changing violent men*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Dobash, R. P., Dobash, R. E., Cavanagh, K., & Lewis, R. (1998). Separate and intersecting realities. A comparison of men's and women's accounts of violence against women. *Violence Against Women*, 4(4), 382-414.

Dobash, R. P., Dobash, R. E., Wilson, M., & Daly, M. (1992). The myth of sexual symmetry in marital violence. *Social Problems*, 39(1), 71-85.

Duffy, A. (1995). The feminist challenge: knowing and ending the violence. In N. Mandell (Ed.), *Feminist issues: Race, class and sexuality*. (pp. 152-184). Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice Hall.

Dunbar, N. E., & Burgoon, J. K. (2005). Perceptions of power and interactional dominance in interpersonal relationships. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 22(2), 207-233.

Dunkle, K. L., Jewkes, R. K., Brown, H. C., Gray, G. E., McIntyre, J. A., & Harlow, S. D. (2004). Gender-based violence, relationship power, and risk of HIV infection in women attending antenatal clinics in South Africa. *The Lancet*, 363(9419), 1415-1421.

Dutton, D. G., Saunders, K., Starzomski, A., & Bartholomew, K. (1994). Intimacy-anger and insecure attachment as precursors of abuse in intimate relationships. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 24(15), 1367-1386.

Eisikovits, Z. (1996). The aftermath of wife beating. Strategies of bounding violent events. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 11(4), 459-474.

Eisikovits, Z., & Buchbinder, E. (1997). Talking violent. A phenomenological study of metaphors battering men use. *Violence Against Women*, 3(5), 482-498.

Eisikovits, Z., & Buchbinder, E. (1999). Talking control metaphors used by battered women. *Violence Against Women*, 5(8), 845-868.

Eisikovits, Z., & Winstok, Z. (2001). Overdrawing and balancing accounts. The contribution of past events to the escalation process from the batterer's perspective. *Violence Against Women*, 7(1), 5-21.

Eisikovits, Z., & Winstok, Z. (2002). Reconstructing intimate violence: The structure and content of recollections of violent events. *Qualitative Health Research*, 12(5), 685-699.

Eisikovits, Z., Winstok, Z., & Fishman, G. (2004). The first Israeli national survey on domestic violence. *Violence Against Women*, 10(7), 729-748.

Ellsberg, M., Peña, R., Herrera, A., Liljestrand, J., & Winkvist, A. (2000). Candies in hell: women's experiences of violence in Nicaragua. *Social Science & Medicine*, 51(2000), 1595-1610.

Equality Now. (2004). *Words and deeds. Holding governments accountable in the Beijing +10 review process*. New York: Equality Now.

Field, C. A., & Caetano, R. (2004). Ethnic differences in intimate partner violence in the U.S. general population. The role of alcohol use and socioeconomic status. *Trauma, Violence & Abuse*, 5(4), 303-317.

Field, C. A., Caetano, R., & Nelson, S. (2004). Alcohol and violence related cognitive risk factors associated with the perpetration of intimate partner violence. *Journal of Family Violence*, 19(4), 249-253.

Fiese, B. H., & Sameroff, A. J. (1999). The family narrative consortium: A multidimensional approach to narratives. *Monographs of the society for research in child development. The stories that families tell: Narrative coherence, narrative interaction and relationship beliefs*, 64(2), 1-36.

Fincham, F. D. (2003). Marital conflict: correlates, structure, and context. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 12(1), 23-27.

Flax, J. (1990). Postmodernism and gender relations in feminist theory. In L. J. Nicholson (Ed.), *Feminism / postmodernism* (pp. 41-62). New York: Routledge.

Fleury, R. E., Sullivan, C. M., & Bybee, D. I. (2000). When ending the relationship does not end the violence. Women's experiences of violence by former partners. *Violence Against Women*, 6(12), 1363-1383.

Forbat, L., & Henderson, J. (2003). "Stuck in the middle with you": The ethics and process of qualitative research with two people in an intimate relationship. *Qualitative Health Research*, 13(10), 1453-1462.

Freedman, J., & Combs, G. (1996). *Narrative therapy: the social construction of preferred realities*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Frith, H. (1998). Constructing the 'other' through talk. *Feminism & Psychology*, 8(4), 530-536.

Gage, A. J. (2005). Women's experiences of intimate partner violence in Haiti. *Social Science & Medicine*, 61(2005), 343-364.

✓ Gavey, N. (1989). Feminist poststructuralism and discourse analysis. Contributions to feminist psychology. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 13, 459-475.

✓ Gavey, N. (1996). Women's desire and sexual violence discourse. In S. Wilkinson (Ed.), *Feminist social psychologies. International perspectives* (pp. 51-65). Buckingham: Open University Press.

✓ Gavey, N. (1997). Feminist poststructuralism and discourse analysis. In M. M. Gergen & S. N. Davis (Eds.), *Toward a new psychology of gender* (pp. 49-60). New York: Routledge.

Gayford, J. J. (1975). Wife battering: a preliminary survey of 100 cases. *British Medical Journal*, 1, 194-197.

Gergen, K. J. (2001). Psychological science in a postmodern context. *American Psychologist*, 56(10), 803-813.

Gergen, M. M. (2001). *Feminist reconstructions in psychology. Narrative, gender, and performance*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Gergen, M. M., & Gergen, K. J. (1984). The social construction of narrative accounts. In K. J. Gergen & M. M. Gergen (Eds.), *Historical social psychology*. Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.

Gilligan, C. (1987). Woman's place in a man's life cycle. In S. Harding (Ed.), *Feminism and methodology* (pp. 57-73). Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Gleason, W. J. (1993). Mental disorders in battered women: an empirical study. *Violence and Victims*, 8(1), 53-68.

Gondolf, E. W. (1999). Characteristics of court-mandated batterers in four cities: Diversity and dichotomies. *Violence Against Women*, 5(11), 1277-1292.

Gonzales de Olarte, E., & Gavilano Llosa, P. (1999). Does poverty cause domestic violence? Some answers from Lima. In A. R. Morrison & M. L. Biehl (Eds.), *Too close to home. Domestic violence in the Americas* (pp. 35-49). Washington: Inter-American Development Bank.

Griffin, C., & Phoenix, A. (1994). The relationship between qualitative and quantitative research: Lessons from feminist psychology. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 4, 287-298.

Haj-Yahia, M. M. (2000a). The incidence of wife abuse and battering and some sociodemographic correlates as revealed by two national surveys in Palestinian society. *Journal of Family Violence*, 15(4), 347-374.

Haj-Yahia, M. M. (2000b). Wife abuse and battering in the sociocultural context of Arab society. *Family Process*, 39(2), 237-255.

Haj-Yahia, M. M. (2001). The incidence of witnessing interparental violence and some of its psychological consequences among Arab adolescents. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 25(7), 885-907.

Hamberger, L. K., & Hastings, J. E. (1991). Personality correlates of men who batter and nonviolent men: some continuities and discontinuities. *Journal of Family Violence*, 6(2), 131-147.

Hamberger, L. K., Lohr, J. M., Bonge, D., & Tolin, D. F. (1996). A large sample empirical typology of male spouse abusers and its relationship to dimensions of abuse. *Violence and Victims*, 11(4), 277-292.

Hampton, R. L., & Gelles, R. J. (1994). Violence toward black women in a nationally representative sample of black families. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 25(1), 105-119.

Hampton, R. L., Vandergriff-Avery, M., & Kim, J. (1999). Understanding the origins and incidence of spousal violence in North America. In T. P. Gullotta & S. J. McElhaney (Eds.), *Violence in homes and communities. Prevention, intervention, and treatment*. (pp. 39-70). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Harding, S. (1987). Introduction: Is there a feminist method? In S. Harding (Ed.), *Feminism & Methodology* (pp. 1-14). Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Harding, S. (1994). Feminism and theories of scientific knowledge. In M. Evans (Ed.), *The woman question* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.

Hearn, J. (1998). *The violences of men*. London: Sage.

Heise, L. (1998). Violence against women. An integrated, ecological framework. *Violence Against Women*, 4(3), 262-290.

Heise, L., Ellsberg, M., & Gottemoeller, M. (1999). *Population Reports. Ending violence against women*. Baltimore: Population Information Program.

Heise, L., & Garcia-Moreno, C. (2002). Violence by intimate partners. In E. G. Krug & L. L. Dahlberg & J. A. Mercy & A. B. Zwi & R. Lozano (Eds.), *World report on violence and health* (pp. 89-121). Geneva: World Health Organisation.

Heiskanen, M., & Piispa, M. (1998). *Faith, hope, battering. A survey of men's violence against women in Finland*. Helsinki: Statistics Finland and Council for Equality.

Hendricks, C., & Lewis, D. (1994). Voices from the margins. *Agenda*, 20, 61-75.

Henriques, J., Hollway, W., Urwin, C., Venn, C., & Walkerdine, V. (1984). *Changing the subject. Psychology, social regulation and subjectivity*. London: Methuen.

Henwood, K., Griffin, C., & Phoenix, A. (1998). Introduction. In K. Henwood & C. Griffin & A. Phoenix (Eds.), *Standpoints and differences. Essays in the practice of feminist psychology*. (pp. 1-17). London: Sage.

Hindin, M. J., & Adair, L. S. (2002). Who's at risk? Factors associated with intimate partner violence in the Philippines. *Social Science & Medicine*, 55(2002), 1385-1399.

Hoff, L. A. (1990). *Battered women as survivors*. London: Routledge.

Hollway, W. (1995). Feminist discourses and women's heterosexual desire. In S. Wilkinson & C. Kitzinger (Eds.), *Feminism and discourse. Psychological perspectives*. (pp. 86-105). London: Sage.

Hollway, W., & Jefferson, T. (2000). *Doing qualitative research differently: free association, narrative and the interview method*. London: Sage.

Holtzworth-Munroe, A. (2000). A typology of men who are violent toward their female partners: Making sense of the heterogeneity in husband violence. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 9(4), 140-143.

Holtzworth-Munroe, A., Bates, L., Smutzler, N., & Sandin, E. (1997). A brief review of the research on husband violence. Part I: Maritally violent versus nonviolent men. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 2(1), 65-99.

Holtzworth-Munroe, A., Meehan, J. C., Herron, K., Rehman, U., & Stuart, G. L. (2000). Testing the Holtzworth-Munroe and Stuart (1994) batterer typology. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 68(6), 1000-1019.

Holtzworth-Munroe, A., Smutzler, N., & Sandin, E. (1997). A brief review of the research on husband violence. Part II: The psychological effects of husband violence on battered women and their children. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 2(2), 179-213.

Holtzworth-Munroe, A., & Stuart, G. L. (1994). Typologies of male batterers: Three subtypes and the differences among them. *Psychological Bulletin*, 116(3), 476-497.

hooks, B. (1994). *Outlaw culture: resisting representations*. New York: Routledge.

Hydén, M. (1994). *Woman battering as marital act. The construction of a violent marriage*. Oslo: Scandinavian University Press.

Hydén, M. (1999). The world of the fearful: battered women's narratives of leaving abusive husbands. *Feminism & Psychology*, 9(4), 449-469.

Jackson, S. (2001). Happily never after: young women's stories of abuse in heterosexual love relationships. *Feminism & Psychology*, 11(3), 305-321.

Jacobs, T., & Suleman, F. (1999). *Breaking the silence: a profile of domestic violence in women attending a community health centre*. Health Systems Trust. Retrieved October 5, 2000, from the World Wide Web: <http://www.hst.org.za/research/violence/>

Jacobson, N. S., Gottman, J. M., Gortner, E., Berns, S., & Shortt, J. W. (1996). Psychological factors in the longitudinal course of battering: When do the couples split up? When does the abuse decrease? *Violence and Victims*, 11(4), 371-392.

Jacobson, N. S., Gottman, J. M., Waltz, J., Rushe, R., Babcock, J., & Holtzworth-Munroe, A. (1994). Affect, verbal content, and psychophysiology in the arguments of couples with a violent husband. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 62, 982-988.

Jewkes, R. (2002). Intimate partner violence: causes and prevention. *The Lancet*, 359(9315), 1423-1429.

Jewkes, R., Levin, J., & Penn-Kekana, L. (2002). Risk factors for domestic violence: findings from a South African cross-sectional study. *Social Science & Medicine*, 55(2002), 1603-1617.

Johnson, H. (2001). Contrasting views of the role of alcohol in cases of wife assault. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 16*(1), 54-72.

Johnson, M. P. (1995). Patriarchal terrorism and common couple violence: Two forms of violence against women. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 57*(2), 283-294.

Kalmus, D. (1984). The intergenerational transmission of marital aggression. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 46*(1), 11-19.

Kane, T. A., & Staiger, P. K. (2000). Male domestic violence. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 15*(1), 16-29.

Kelly, L. (1990). How women define their experiences of violence. In K. Yllö & M. Bograd (Eds.), *Feminist perspectives on wife abuse*. (pp. 114-132). Newbury Park: Sage.

Kemp, A., Green, B. L., Hovanitz, C., & Rawlings, E. I. (1995). Incidence and correlates of posttraumatic stress disorder in battered women. Shelter and community samples. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 10*(1), 43-55.

Kemp, A., Rawlings, E. I., & Green, B. L. (1991). Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in battered women: A shelter sample. *Journal of Traumatic Stress, 4*(1), 137-148.

Kesner, J. E., & McKenry, P. C. (1998). The role of childhood attachment factors in predicting male violence toward female intimates. *Journal of Family Violence, 13*(4), 417-432.

Kim, J., & Emery, C. (2003). Marital power, conflict, norm consensus, and marital violence in a nationally representative sample of Korean couples. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 18*(2), 197-219.

Kirkwood, C. (1993). *Leaving abusive partners*. London: Sage.

Kohlberg, L. (1966). A cognitive-developmental analysis of children's sex-role concepts and attitudes. In E. E. Maccoby (Ed.), *The development of sex differences* (pp. 82-173). Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Lea, K. (2002). Supercodes reflected in titles battered women accord to their life stories. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 1*(1).

Lee, R. M., & Renzetti, C. M. (1993). The problems of researching sensitive topics: an overview and introduction. In C. M. Renzetti & R. M. Lee (Eds.), *Researching sensitive topics* (pp. 3-13). Newbury Park: Sage.

Lempert, L. B. (1996). Women's strategies for survival: developing agency in abusive relationships. *Journal of Family Violence*, 11(3), 269-289.

Lewin, E. (1995). Writing lesbian ethnography. In R. Behar & D. A. Gordon (Eds.), *Women writing culture* (pp. 322-335). Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Lewis, D. (1992). The politics of feminism in South Africa. *Staffrider*, 10, 15-21.

Lieblich, A., Tuval-Mashiach, R., & Zilber, T. (1998). *Narrative research. Reading, analysis, and interpretation*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Lui, M. (1999). Enduring violence and staying in marriage: Stories of battered women in rural China. *Violence Against Women*, 5(12), 1469-1492a.

Lundgren, E., Heimer, G., Westerstrand, J., & Kalliokoski, A. (2001). *Captured queen: Men's violence against women in 'equal' Sweden - a prevalence study*. Stockholm: Fritzes Offentliga Publikationer.

Lutz, C. (1995). The gender of theory. In R. Behar & D. A. Gordon (Eds.), *Women writing culture* (pp. 249-266). Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Macdonald, M. (1995). *Representing women. Myths of femininity in the popular media*. London: Edward Arnold.

Maconachie, M., Angless, T., & van Zyl, M. (1993). *Battered women seeking solutions: a study of women who have taken refuge at the Rape Crisis shelter in Cape Town*. Pretoria: HSRC.

Mama, A. (1995). *Beyond the masks. Race, gender and subjectivity*. London: Routledge.

Mama, A. (1996). *The hidden struggle. Statutory and voluntary sector responses to violence against black women in the home*. London: Whiting & Birch Ltd.

Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (1999). *Designing qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Martin, S. L., Tsui, A., & Maitra, K. (1999). Domestic violence in northern India. *American Journal of Epidemiology*, 150(4), 417-426.

Mashishi, A. (2000). Wife battering: an exploration of the abuse of women at two shelters in Johannesburg. *Society in Transition*, 31(1), 82-87.

Masuku, S. (2001). South Africa: World crime capital? *Nedbank ISS Crime Index*, 5(1).

Mathews, S., Abrahams, N., Martin, L., Vetten, L., van der Merwe, L., & Jewkes, R. (2004). "Every six hours a woman is killed by her intimate partner": A national study of female homicide in South Africa. Retrieved August 30, 2004, from the World Wide Web: <http://www.mrc.ac.za/policybriefs/woman.pdf>

Mbokota, M., & Moodley, J. (2003). Domestic abuse - an antenatal survey at King Edward VIII Hospital, Durban. *South African Medical Journal*, 93(6), 455-457.

McCloskey, L. A. (1996). Socioeconomic and coercive power within the family. *Gender & Society*, 10(4), 449-463.

McKenry, P. C., Julian, T. W., & Gavazzi, S. M. (1995). Toward a biopsychosocial model of domestic violence. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 57(2), 370-320.

McWhirter, P. T. (1999). La Violencia Privada. Domestic violence in Chile. *American Psychologist*, 54(1), 37-40.

Medina-Ariza, J., & Barberet, R. (2003). Intimate partner violence in Spain. Findings from a national survey. *Violence Against Women*, 9(3), 302-322.

Meer, S. (1997). Feminist agendas in activism and academia - the challenge for Agenda. *Agenda*, 34, 5-16.

Mertin, P., & Mohr, P. B. (2000). Incidence and correlates of posttraumatic stress disorder in Australian victims of domestic violence. *Journal of Family Violence*, 15(4), 411-422.

Miles-Doan, R. (1998). Violence between spouses and intimates: does neighborhood context matter? *Social Forces*, 77(2), 623-645.

Mills, T. (1985). The assault on the self: stages in coping with battering husbands. *Qualitative Sociology*, 8(2), 103-123.

Mishler, E. G. (1986). *Research interviewing. Context and narrative*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Moore, H. (1994). The problem of explaining violence in the social sciences. In P. Harvey & P. Gow (Eds.), *Sex and violence. Issues in representation and experience* (pp. 138-155). London: Routledge.

Moraes, C. L., & Reichenheim, M. E. (2002). Domestic violence during pregnancy in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. *International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics*, 79(3), 269-277.

Morrell, R. (2001). Times of change: men and masculinity in South Africa. In R. Morrell (Ed.), *Changing men in Southern Africa*. (pp. 3-37). Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press.

Morris, A., & Reilly, J. (2003). *New Zealand national survey of crime victims*. Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Justice.

Murray, M. (2003a). Narrative psychology. In J. A. Smith (Ed.), *Qualitative psychology: A practical guide to research methods* (pp. 111-131). London: Sage.

Murray, M. (2003b). Narrative psychology and narrative analysis. In P. M. Camic & J. E. Rhodes & L. Yardley (Eds.), *Qualitative research in psychology. Expanding perspectives in methodology and design* (pp. 95-112). Washington DC: American Psychological Association.

Muthal-Rathore, A., Tripathi, R., & Arora, R. (2002). Domestic violence against pregnant women interviewed at a hospital in New Delhi. *International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics*, 76(1), 83-85.

Olson, L. N. (2002). Exploring "common couple violence" in heterosexual romantic relationships. *Western Journal of Communication*, 66(1), 104-128.

O'Neill, D. (1998). A post-structuralist review of the theoretical literature surrounding wife abuse. *Violence Against Women*, 4(4), 457-490.

Palmay, I. (1999). *Psychology's construction of a gendered subjectivity through support groups for domestic violence*. Unpublished Masters thesis, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg.

Parker, I. (1990). Discourse: definitions and contradictions. *Philosophical Psychology*, 3(2/3), 189-202 [Electronic version].

Parker, I. (1999). Introduction: varieties of discourse and analysis. In I. Parker & The Bolton Discourse Network (Eds.), *Critical textwork: an introduction to varieties of discourse and analysis* (pp. 1-12). Buckingham: Open University Press.

Perilla, J. L., Bakeman, R., & Norris, F. H. (1994). Culture and domestic violence: the ecology of abused Latinas. *Violence and Victims*, 9(4), 325-339.

Petrik, N. D., Petrik Olson, R. E., & Subotnik, L. S. (1994). Powerlessness and the need to control. The male abuser's dilemma. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 9(2), 278-285.

Profitt, N. J. (2000). *Women survivors, psychological trauma, and the politics of resistance*. New York: The Haworth Press.

Ptacek, J. (1990). Why do men batter their wives? In K. Yllö & M. Bograd (Eds.), *Feminist perspectives on wife abuse* (pp. 133-157). Newbury Park: Sage.

Rasool, S., Vermaak, K., Pharoah, R., Louw, A., & Stavrou, A. (2002). *Violence against women. A national survey*. Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies.

Reitz, R. R. (1999). Batterers' experiences of being violent. A phenomenological study. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 23(1), 143-165.

Reitzel-Jaffe, D., & Wolfe, D. A. (2001). Predictors of relationship abuse among young men. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 16(2), 99-115.

Richie, B. E., & Kanuha, V. (1997). Battered women of color in public health care systems. In M. B. Zinn & P. Hondagneu-Sotelo & M. Messner (Eds.), *Through the prism of difference: readings on sex and gender* (pp. 121-129). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Riessman, C. K. (1990). *Divorce talk. Women and men make sense of personal relationships*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Riessman, C. K. (1993). *Narrative analysis*. Newbury Park: Sage.

Rinfret-Raynor, M., Riou, A., Cantin, S., Drouin, C., & Dube, M. (2004). A survey on violence against female partners in Quebec, Canada. *Violence Against Women*, 10(7), 709-728.

Robertson, J. (2000). Ethical issues and researching sensitive topics: mature women and 'bulimia'. *Feminism & Psychology*, 10(4), 531-537.

Ronan, G. F., Dreer, L. E., Dollard, K. M., & Ronan, D. W. (2004). Violent couples: Coping and communication skills. *Journal of Family Violence*, 19(2), 131-137.

Rosewater, L. B. (1990). Battered or schizophrenic? Psychological tests can't tell. In K. Yllö & M. Bograd (Eds.), *Feminist perspectives on wife abuse* (pp. 200-216). Newbury Park: Sage.

Sagrestano, L. M., Heavey, C. L., & Christensen, A. (1999). Perceived power and physical violence in marital conflict. *Journal of Social Issues*, 55(1), 65-79.

Salo, E. (2003). Negotiating gender and personhood in the new South Africa. Adolescent women and gangsters in Manenberg township on the Cape Flats. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 6(3), 345-365.

Saunders, D. G. (1994). Posttraumatic stress symptom profiles of battered women: A comparison of survivors in two settings. *Violence and Victims*, 9(1), 31-43.

Scott, M. B., & Lyman, S. M. (1968). Accounts. *American Sociological Review*, 33(1), 46-62.

Scully, D. (1994). *Understanding sexual violence. A study of convicted rapists*. New York: Routledge.

Serote, P. (1992). Issues of 'race' and power expressed during gender conferences in South Africa. *Agenda*, 14, 22-24.

Shefer, T. (1999). *Discourses of heterosexual subjectivity and negotiation*. Unpublished Doctoral thesis, University of the Western Cape, Bellville.

Shefer, T., Strebel, A., & Foster, D. (2000). "So women have to submit to that ...". Discourses of power and violence in student's talk on heterosexual negotiation. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 30(2), 11-19.

Silverman, D. (2001). *Interpreting qualitative data. Methods for analysing talk, text and interaction*. (2nd edition ed.). London: Sage.

Simpson, G. (1992). *Jack asses and jackrollers: rediscovering gender in understanding violence*. [Occasional paper]. Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation. Retrieved September 7, 1999, from the World Wide Web: www.wits.ac.za/csvr/papjack.htm

Skuja, K., & Halford, W. K. (2004). Repeating the errors of our parents? Parental violence in men's family of origin and conflict management in dating couples. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 19(6), 623-638.

Smith, J. A. (2003). *Qualitative psychology: a practical guide to research methods*. London: Sage.

Snell, J. E., Rosenwald, R. J., & Robey, A. (1964). The wife beater's wife: A study of family interaction. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 11, 107-113.

Squire, C. (1998). Women and men talk about aggression: an analysis of narrative genre. In K. Henwood & C. Griffin & A. Phoenix (Eds.), *Standpoints and differences. Essays in the practice of feminist psychology* (pp. 65-90). London: Sage.

Stamp, G. H., & Sabourin, T. C. (1995). Accounting for violence: an analysis of male spouse abuse narratives. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 23, 284-307.

Stark, E., & Flitcraft, A. (1996). *Women at risk. Domestic violence and women's health*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Statistics South Africa. (2000). *Quantitative research findings on rape in South Africa*. Pretoria: Statistics South Africa.

Statistics South Africa. (2004). *Statsonline*. Statistics South Africa. Retrieved December 3, 2004, from the World Wide Web: <http://www.statssa.gov.za>

Steier, F. (1991). Introduction: research as self-reflexivity, self-reflexivity as social process. In F. Steier (Ed.), *Research and reflexivity* (pp. 1-11). London: Sage.

Stein, M. B., & Kennedy, C. (2001). Major depressive and post-traumatic stress disorder comorbidity in female victims of intimate partner violence. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 66(2), 133-138.

Stevens, G., Seedat, M., & van Niekerk, A. (2003). Understanding and preventing violence. In K. Ratele & N. Duncan (Eds.), *Social psychology: Identities and relationships* (pp. 353-371). Lansdowne: UCT Press.

Stith, S. M., Smith, D. B., Penn, C. E., Ward, D. B., & Tritt, D. (2004). Intimate partner physical abuse perpetration and victimisation risk factors: A meta-analytic review. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 10(1), 65-98.

Straus, M. A. (1979). Measuring intrafamily conflict and violence: The Conflict Tactics (CT) Scales. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 41(1), 75-88.

Straus, M. A., & Gelles, R. J. (1986). Societal change and change in family violence from 1975 to 1985 as revealed by two national surveys. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 48(3), 465-479.

Straus, M. A., Gelles, R. J., & Steinmetz, S. K. (1980). *Behind closed doors: Violence in the American family*. Garden City, New York: Anchor Press.

Szasz, I. (1998). Masculine identity and the meanings of sexuality: A review of research in Mexico. *Reproductive Health Matters*, 6(12), 97-104.

Terre Blanche, M., & Kelly, K. (1999). Interpretive methods. In M. Terre Blanche & K. Durrheim (Eds.), *Research in practice. Applied methods for the social sciences* (pp. 123-146). Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press.

Towns, A., & Adams, P. (2000). "If I really loved him enough, he would be okay": women's accounts of male partner violence. *Violence Against Women*, 6(6), 558-585.

Tweed, R. G., & Dutton, D. G. (1998). A comparison of impulsive and instrumental subgroups of batterers. *Violence and Victims*, 13(3), 217-230.

Umberson, D., Anderson, K., Glick, J., & Shapiro, A. (1998). Domestic violence, personal control, and gender. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 60, 442-452.

United Nations. (1993). *Declaration on the elimination of violence against women*. United Nations. Retrieved 7 July 2004, 2004, from the World Wide Web: <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r104.htm>

Vest, J. R., Catlin, T. K., Chen, J. J., & Brownson, R. C. (2002). Multistate analysis of factors associated with intimate partner violence. *American Journal of Preventative Medicine*, 22(3), 156-164.

Vetten, L. (2000). Gender, race and power dynamics in the face of social change. Deconstructing violence against women in South Africa. In Y. J. Park & J. Fedler & Z. Dangor (Eds.), *Reclaiming women's spaces. New perspectives on violence against women and sheltering in South Africa*. (pp. 47-80). Johannesburg: Nisaa Institute for Women's Development.

Vogelman, L., & Eagle, G. (1991). Overcoming endemic violence against women. *Social Justice*, 18(1), 209-229.

Walker, L. E. (1979). *The battered woman*. New York: Harper & Row.

Walker, L. E. (1984). *The battered woman syndrome*. New York: Springer.

Walker, L. E. (1991). Post-traumatic stress disorder in women: Diagnosis and treatment of battered woman syndrome. *Psychotherapy*, 18(1), 21-29.

Walker, L. E. (2000). *The battered woman syndrome* (2nd Edition ed.). New York: Springer.

Walkerdine, V. (1997). *Daddy's girl: young girls and popular culture*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Waltz, J., Babcock, J. C., Jacobson, N. S., & Gottman, J. M. (2000). Testing a typology of batterers. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 68(4), 658-669.

Weedon, C. (1987). *Feminist practice and poststructuralist theory*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers.

Weger, H. (2005). Disconfirming communication and self-verification in marriage: association among the demand/withdraw interaction pattern, feeling understood, and marital satisfaction. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 22(1), 19-31.

Weis, L., Centrie, C., Valentin-Juarbe, J., & Fine, M. (2002). Puerto Rican men and the struggle for place in the United States. An exploration of cultural citizenship, gender, and violence. *Men and Masculinities*, 4(3), 286-302.

Westlund, A. C. (1999). Pre-modern and modern power: Foucault and the case of domestic violence. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 24(4), 1045-1066.

Whitfield, C. L., Anda, R. F., Dube, S. R., & Felitti, V. J. (2003). Violent childhood experiences and the risk of intimate partner violence in adults. Assessment in a large health maintenance organization. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 18(2), 166-185.

Wilkinson, D. L., & Hamerschlag, S. J. (2004). Situational determinants in intimate partner violence. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 9(6), 675-691.

Wilkinson, S., & Kitzinger, C. (Eds.). (1993). *Heterosexuality: A "Feminism & Psychology" Reader*. London: Sage.

Willig, C. (2001). *Introducing qualitative research in psychology: adventures in theory and method*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Wood, J. T. (2001). The normalization of violence in heterosexual romantic relationships: Women's narratives of love and violence. *Journal of Social & Personal Relationships*, 18(2), 239-262.

Wood, J. T. (2004). Monsters and victims: male felons' accounts of intimate partner violence. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 21(5), 555-576.

Wood, K., & Jewkes, R. (2001). 'Dangerous' love. Reflections on violence among Xhosa township youth. In R. Morrell (Ed.), *Changing men in southern Africa* (pp. 317-336). Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press.

Yassour Borochowitz, D., & Eisikovits, Z. (2002). To love violently. Strategies for reconciling love and violence. *Violence Against Women*, 8(4), 476-494.

Yoshihama, M. (2000). Reinterpreting strength and safety in a socio-cultural context: dynamics of domestic violence and experiences of women of Japanese descent. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 22(3), 207-229.

Zaman, H. (1999). Violence against women in Bangladesh: issues and responses. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 22(1), 37-48.

APPENDIX A

Violence Indices

Appendix A-1

Violence Assessment Index (VAI)

Thinking of ALL the incidents that may have happened in a typical year in your relationship, please tell me how many times you have done each of the following:

Number of times

- | | | |
|---|-------|--|
| A | _____ | Restrained her from moving or leaving the room |
| B | _____ | Choked her or held your hand over her mouth |
| C | _____ | Punched her in the face |
| D | _____ | Forced her to do something against her will |
| E | _____ | Slapped her on the face, body, arms or legs |
| F | _____ | Pushed, grabbed or shoved her |
| G | _____ | Threatened to kill yourself |
| H | _____ | Punched her on the body, arms or legs |
| I | _____ | Used an object to hurt her |
| J | _____ | Kicked or punched her in the stomach when pregnant |
| K | _____ | Threw things at her or about the room |
| L | _____ | Demanded sex when she didn't want it |
| M | _____ | Punched or kicked the walls or furniture |
| N | _____ | Threatened to hit the kids |
| O | _____ | Shouted at or threatened the kids |
| P | _____ | Forced her to have sex or some kind of sexual activity |
| Q | _____ | Tried to strangle, smother or drown her |
| R | _____ | Kicked her on the body, arms or legs |
| S | _____ | Shouted and screamed at her |
| T | _____ | Threatened her with an object or weapon |
| U | _____ | Kicked her in the face |
| V | _____ | Swore at her or called her names |
| W | _____ | Threatened to kill her |
| X | _____ | Twisted her arm |
| Y | _____ | Dragged her or pulled her by the hair |
| Z | _____ | Threatened her with your fist, hand or foot |

Source: Dobash, Dobash, Cavanagh and Lewis (2000)

Injury Assessment Index (IAI)

Thinking of ALL the incidents that may have happened in a typical, please tell me how many times you have done each of the following:

Number of times

A	_____	Cut/s on her face
B	_____	Bruise/s on her body
C	_____	Burn/s anywhere on body
D	_____	Lost hair / pulled out
E	_____	Broken arm or leg
F	_____	Cut/s on her arms or legs
G	_____	Bruise/s on her face
H	_____	Miscarriage
I	_____	Blackout or unconsciousness
J	_____	Bruise/s on her arms or legs
K	_____	Cut/s anywhere on her body
L	_____	Black eye/s
M	_____	Internal injury
N	_____	Lost or broken teeth
O	_____	Sickness or vomiting
P	_____	Bleeding on any part of face
Q	_____	Broken ribs
R	_____	Bleeding on body, arms or legs
S	_____	Split lip
T	_____	Sprained wrist or ankle
U	_____	Broken nose, jaw or cheekbone

Source: Dobash, Dobash, Cavanagh and Lewis (2000)

Controlling Behaviours Index

In a typical year, how often have you done the following things to your partner, which means she must be careful?

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
A. Threaten her					
B. Shout at her					
C. Swear at her					
D. Shout at the children					
E. Threaten to hurt the children					
F. Call her names					
G. Question her about her activities					
H. Check her movements					
I. Have a certain mood or look					
J. Try to provoke an argument					
K. Criticise her					
L. Criticise her family or friends					
M. Put her down in front of others					
N. Deliberately keep her short of money					
O. Make her feel sexually inadequate					
P. Point at her (threateningly)					
Q. Make to hit without doing so					
R. Restrict her social life					
S. Use kids in an argument					
T. Threaten to hurt the pet					
U. Nag her					

Source: Dobash, Dobash, Cavanagh and Lewis (2000)

APPENDIX B

Transcribing Conventions

...	Ellipses indicate a pause of less than 4 seconds
((long pause))	Refers to a pause of 4 seconds or longer
/.../	Indicate talk omitted from the extract
(text)	Additional or replaced word/s to make the excerpt read better or to make grammatical sense
((text))	Transcriber's explanatory comments
<u>Text</u>	Underlining indicates vocal emphasis by participant
And -	Indicates a sudden breaking off of speech
=	Indicates overlapping talk
wanna gonna	Modified spelling is used to suggest pronunciation variants

APPENDIX C

Participant Consent Form

Researcher: Floretta Boonzaier
Institution: University of Cape Town
Address: Department of Psychology
University of Cape Town
Rondebosch
7701
Telephone: 650 4605 / 083 583 9836
Email: floretta@webmail.co.za

You are requested to participate in an interview that may last approximately 1 – 2 hours. In this interview we will discuss some of the problems you may have experienced in your relationship. Given the sensitive nature of the topic it is likely that you may experience some difficulty in discussing some of these issues and I will take every care to ensure that you are comfortable throughout the process and that you will not be harmed in any way.

You are encouraged to ask any questions at any time about the nature of the study and the methods that I am using. Your suggestions and concerns are important to me. If you have any further questions or comments, please contact me at the address/phone number listed above.

1. The purpose of this research is:

- a) To fulfil the requirements of my PhD degree at the University of Cape Town, and
- b) To gain insight into men and women's narratives/stories of their relationships.

2. I guarantee that the following conditions will be met:

- a) Your real name will not be used in any source of the research; instead, you will be given a pseudonym through which you will be identified. Any other names or identifying details will also be omitted or changed in order to guarantee your anonymity.
- b) The information that you divulge will be confidential unless you inform me of your intention to harm yourself or someone else.
- c) With your permission I will tape record the interview to ensure that the information is recorded accurately. If you grant permission for audio-taping, no tapes will be used for any other purpose than that to which we have agreed. During the interview, you may request to switch off the tape recorder at any time or to delete any information from the tapes.
- d) I will take extra care to store all my research data in a safe and secure place, to which only I have access.
- e) Your participation in this project is entirely voluntary and you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason and the information already collected will be returned to you or destroyed. Your refusal to participate in this study will in no way affect any relationship that you may have with FAMSA.

- f) The results of the study will be written in the form of reports, an academic thesis and may also be published in an academic journal – while ensuring you of complete anonymity.

3. Benefits of the project:

- a) To be given an open, non-threatening environment to discuss issues of concern about the relationship.
- b) Participants will be given an opportunity to provide input into the research, which may assist others working in the areas of violence.
- c) The researcher will be available and accessible to the participants throughout the study period in order to address issues of concern.

I agree to and understand the terms set out above.

.....
PARTICIPANT

.....
DATE

.....
RESEARCHER

.....
DATE